A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE 'BILINGUAL APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF CHINESE LANGUAGE' IN SINGAPORE

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SUMMARY

The role that a language plays in the acquisition of another language is a complex issue in language research and pedagogy, often influenced by cultural and socio-political considerations. Through looking at the responses of 130 Singaporean Chinese to a project called the "Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language" announced by the Singapore Ministry of Education, the study reflects on language-culture relationship and language purity. In addition, a description of the respondents' language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism is provided. The methodology employed is both quantitative and qualitative, with data from surveys and in-depth interviews. The study also proposes some suggestions concerning implementation of the teaching approach in the classrooms.

Using the results of this study, I have made some interesting observations concerning the language ideologies of Singaporean Chinese of different ages and different educational language streams. The study reveals that for the older generation, the English-educated are optimistic about the Bilingual Approach whereas the Chinese-educated have misgivings concerning the approach. It is also noted that the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese values highly the role of Chinese language in transmitting Chinese culture. However, they also see the pragmatic advantage of using a stronger language (in this case, English) to explain the weaker language. Their ambivalence can be symptomatic of a process of coming to terms with their bilingual profiles in Singapore's society, where the

‘mother tongue’ has been portrayed as the language of culture and English has been projected simply as a language for commercial and administrative reasons. The study has found that responses to the Bilingual Approach are most affected by the extent to which respondents feel that the English language can transmit Chinese culture and their belief in language purity. The study concludes with a call for a re-look at the portrayal of language-culture relationship in Singapore’s society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SINGAPORE'S POLICY OF BILINGUALISM

Singapore is a Southeast Asian country which has a population of around three million on 680 square kilometers of land (Pakir, 2000). Of its population, the Chinese form the majority (77%), with Malays (15%), Indians (7%) and other groups such as the Eurasians and Armenians (1%). Of its four official languages (Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and English), the first three languages are prescribed as the "mother tongue" of the Chinese, Malays and Indians respectively. English was designated the working language of the country as it did not belong to any of the three major ethnic groups and it is also a language of wider communication. Besides the official languages, other Malay languages of Indonesian origin, various Chinese dialects and South Asian ethnic languages are also spoken in Singapore. It has to be mentioned that reflecting informal usage in Singapore, the term "dialects" has been used in this study to refer to Chinese dialects such as Hokkien and Cantonese.

The bilingual policy, effective since 1965, aims to develop each child to become bilingual and bi-literate in English and the child's ascribed "mother

tongue". The former Minister for Education Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam (1986) summarized the policy concisely:

> Our policy of bilingualism that each child should learn English and his mother tongue, I regard as a fundamental feature of our education system…Children must learn English so that they will have a window to the knowledge, technology and expertise of the modern world. They must know their mother tongues to enable them to know what makes us what we are.

As Ang (1998) points out, bilingualism has distinctive connotations in the Singapore context. Singapore's policy of bilingualism does not mean the same as what is commonly understood in academic discussions as "bilingual education". The latter refers to education in two languages, with instruction given in both (Pakir, 2000). In Singapore's education system, since 1987, English is the medium of instruction used to teach all curriculum subjects except the "mother tongue" subject. The "mother tongue" is a subject normally available at second language level. It is only in Special Assistance Schools and some other schools that languages are offered at first language level. In all cases, the "mother tongue" language is only used as the medium of instruction in "mother tongue" lessons.

Many researchers have pointed to the shift to English made especially by the younger generation in Singapore (Gupta, 1991; Pakir, 1995, 1998a). As Pakir (2000) points out, members of the younger generation are the immediate witnesses of the rise of English as a global force and hence are aware of the pragmatics of

knowing English. Besides the primary shift to English for the general Singapore population, there has been a secondary shift to Mandarin among the Chinese population (Xu et al., 1998; Ang, 1998). Xu et al. (1998) in their study of the Singapore Chinese community conclude that Mandarin will remain in competition on a bi-directional basis, with English and with the other Chinese dialects in increasing private use. As Pakir (2000) remarks, this phenomenon arises partly because the younger generation were being brought up to become bilingual in school languages which were not perhaps the home languages of their own parents or grandparents. It is the context of the rise of English in private use at home that necessitates the "Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language", a new teaching approach adopted by the Singapore Ministry of Education since January 2002. Before examining the motivations and features of this teaching approach, let me first provide a quick survey on how Chinese Language has been taught in Singapore.

1.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TEACHING OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN SINGAPORE

Ang (1998)'s article provides a good account of the teaching of Chinese language in Singapore. Ang divides its history into four main stages: the teaching of Chinese to the early Chinese immigrants, during and after the revolution in China, during and after the Japanese Occupation, and before and after Singapore's independence.

I will not go through each of these four stages in detail but will list the significant changes to provide us the context of Chinese language teaching in Singapore.

The teaching of Chinese to early Chinese immigrants

When Singapore became a British settlement after 1819, immigrants from China came to Singapore as traders or labourers. At this time, schooling depended on individual ethnic communities to set up their own schools and teach in the vernacular. Old-style Chinese schools were set up for the children of these Chinese immigrants. The textbooks were written in classical Chinese and Chinese dialects were used as the medium of instruction. It is interesting that Chinese dialects were once used as the medium of instruction, proving that the native language of most of the immigrants was not Mandarin Chinese but the Chinese dialects.

The teaching of Chinese during and after the 1911 revolution in China

As Chinese revolutionaries often visited Singapore during the 1911 revolution, many Chinese schools were set up under their influence. The teachers and textbooks used were from China. Chinese language teaching was hence very China-based. These schools also fostered Chinese culture, Chinese nationalism and patriotism. From this, it is clear that the link between Chinese schools (which were the only type of schools which taught Chinese language then) and Chinese culture, nationalism and patriotism is a historic one. The tradition of Chinese schools has since remained closely associated with that of Chinese culture and nationalism.

This could account for the strong attachment that the current older generation who were educated in Chinese schools have towards Chinese culture and nationalism.

It was only after Mandarin was selected as the national language of the Republic of China in 1917 that the medium of instruction in Singapore Chinese schools was switched from the Chinese dialects to Mandarin. The move to select a national language out of many language varieties (in this study, I consider "language varieties" as separate languages which are mutually unintelligible) spoken by people in various parts of China was motivated by a desire to unite China. Mandarin was chosen because it was the most common language used in northern China which was the political, economic and cultural center of China at that time. Ever since, Mandarin has been the medium of instruction for Chinese language teaching in Singapore. It is noteworthy that the change of the medium of instruction was due to a political decision in China and not because the people in Singapore spoke Mandarin as their native language. In fact, the immigrants from China were mainly from the southeastern provinces of Fujian and Guangdong (Ang, 1998) who spoke Chinese dialects instead of Mandarin.

In 1918, post-primary Chinese education was developed. In 1919, textbooks written in colloquial Chinese replaced those written in classical Chinese. This move followed that which was done in China. Chinese language was introduced as an optional subject in English secondary schools in 1938. However, there were no textbooks and teaching methods specially designed for it.

During and after the Japanese Occupation

In 1942, Japan successfully invaded Singapore and the British had to surrender Singapore to Japan. The Japanese Occupation gave the Chinese a heightened awareness of their ethnicity and a stronger allegiance towards China. The Chinese were treated severely by the Japanese as China itself had been at war with Japan since 1937. During the Japanese Occupation, Chinese Language (originally taught as a first language) was relegated to the status of a second language and subsequently disappeared from the school curriculum. With the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, British forces returned to Singapore. After World War II, many Chinese, in particular the Straits-born Chinese, decided to send their children to Chinese schools. Chinese schools sprang up throughout the island in the years 1945-1949. The textbooks were still from China.

Before independence

The British felt that their interests would be best served by the English-educated elite. Thus, free education was only available in the English medium schools. The colonial masters also made provision for the transfer of bright pupils from mother tongue medium schools to English medium schools. In 1954, because of the student unrest in some Chinese medium schools which supported the communist cause, parents reconsidered the environment in which they wanted their children to be in. It was then that enrolment in English schools began to exceed that of the Chinese

schools and consequently, the number of pupils who learned Chinese as a second language (henceforth CL2) increased.

After independence

In 1959, the British granted internal self-government for Singapore. A few years later, in 1965, Singapore became an independent state. With the bilingual education policy introduced by the Singapore government and the rise of English as a common language for trade, an increasing number of parents sent their children to English medium schools, trusting that an English education would provide better career prospects. CL2 was made a compulsory subject in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) and in the School Certificate Examination (leaving examination at secondary level) in 1965 and 1969 respectively. The Ministry of Education also removed the Chinese classical texts and the Chinese-English translation section from the syllabus to lighten the load of the pupils studying CL2. It is interesting to note that there was initially a translation section in the syllabus, proving that the translation method was once recognized as a way of testing pupils' understanding of Chinese. The translation method may be something that is worth looking into for the teaching and assessment purposes of the bilingual approach. However, I will not devote attention to it as it is not the focus of this study.

The CL2 national pass rate in the PSLE was below 50% in 1968. The findings of a Ministry of Education survey were that the low passing rate was probably due to the fact that both languages studied in schools were not the native

languages of the majority of the Chinese pupils as 90% of them spoke Chinese dialects (i.e. language varieties such as Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese) with their families and friends. This in turn had affected their written Chinese. For example, they were unable to use the appropriate vocabulary to express themselves in writing. They also often spoke in incomplete sentences which were unacceptable in Mandarin sentence construction.

Several measures were taken to improve this situation, among them being the introduction of the Hanyu Pinyin system (transliterating Chinese characters into letters of the English alphabet using phonetics) and the development of new instructional materials for primary and secondary schools which were launched in 1980 and 1983 respectively. The passages in the textbooks included those with acceptable Chinese moral values and culture that did not portray Singapore negatively as well as topics on science, technology and customs of ASEAN countries. It is striking that at this point in time, there was already a concern that the Chinese moral values and culture should not clash with the interest of nationhood in Singapore. While there is a desire to connect with the Chinese values and culture, there is also a pertinent need to defend Singapore's interest as an independent country. This is a tension that is present even till today as there are discussions on what "Asian values" and "Chinese values" really mean. This tension is potentially confusing as it adds complexity to who we (the Singaporean Chinese) really are.

The Goh Keng Swee Report on Education in 1978 stated that 85% of Chinese children did not speak either Mandarin or English at home. More than 60% of them failed in one or both languages at the PSLE and GCE 'Ordinary' Level Examination. In addition, a Ministry of Education survey conducted in 1979 found that those who spoke only dialects at home fared the worst in their first and second language examinations in both the English and Chinese medium schools. These gave rise to a nation-wide "Speak Mandarin Campaign" held annually up till today.

The objective in the initial years was to replace the use of Chinese dialects with Mandarin at home and in the community. The efforts of this campaign bore fruit. In 1987, 68% of the Primary 1 cohort of Chinese pupils spoke Mandarin at home. Only 12.5% spoke dialects at home. It is worthy to note that the government recognized that one major cause of the poor performance in Chinese language was due to the factor of the home language. What we need to recognize in our present situation is that many pupils do not perform well in Chinese because the language spoken at home is not Mandarin, but English. The rise in the domestic use of English is related to the spread of literacy in English through English-medium education. As Gupta (1994) observes, the use of English in Singapore's highly competitive education system provides an incentive for parents to use English at home.

While it would be impractical and detrimental to expect the government to eradicate English from the homes, there is a need to encourage Chinese as another

language to be spoken at home should the government really want to encourage Chinese language learning among the English-speaking community. This clearly takes efforts on the part of the government and more importantly on the parents themselves. To expect children to do well in Chinese simply as an examination subject rarely put into use is as unfeasible in the past as it is now.

Besides promoting language learning of Mandarin, the Ministry of Education also wanted to promote ethical values such as politeness, honesty and kindness. This was done by publishing a syllabus for the teaching of Ethics in primary and secondary schools in 1959. Civics was taught in primary and secondary schools in place of Ethics in 1968. The main objective of the Civics syllabus was similar to that of Ethics, just that Civics aimed to inculcate the additional values of patriotism to Singapore and civic consciousness. The new Civics syllabus was introduced to all Malay, Tamil, Chinese and English-medium schools.

In 1974, Education for Living (EFL) replaced the Civics programme for primary schools while secondary schools continued with the Civics syllabus. EFL combined Civics with History and Geography to help pupils understand and live in a rapidly changing society. Both EFL and Civics were taught in the mother tongue (Chinese/Malay/Tamil), the rationale being that “pupils would find it easier to understand their own cultural and historical heritage if these lessons were taught in their first language or mother tongue.” (Report on moral education, 1979) In

addition, moral values and attitudes were reinforced through language teaching by incorporating stories into the CL1/CL2 textbooks, though they were not as adequately covered in Malay or Tamil language textbooks.

A Moral Education programme gradually replaced EFL and the Civics courses in the 1980's. Since then, other changes have been made to the Moral Education programme but one thing remains unchanged and that is, Moral Education is taught in the mother tongue for primary schools. It is significantthat moral education in Singapore has always been closely associated with the mother tongue and is reinforced through language teaching.

From the years 1968-1978, there was a gradual disappearance of Chinese schools in Singapore. The process of replacing them with national-type schools, where Chinese pupils learnt English as a first language and Chinese as a second language, took place in 1987. In 1992, CL1, CL2 and CL3 were renamed Higher Chinese, Chinese and Basic Chinese (a subject taken by primary school students in EM3 stream) respectively. From 1995 onwards to the present day, more pupils are allowed to take Higher Chinese in secondary schools. In 1999, the Ministry announced that the pool of students offered Higher Chinese would be enlarged at both primary and secondary levels. The same applied to Higher Malay and Higher Tamil pupils.

The Chinese 'B' syllabus was also introduced in 2001 for secondary school and junior college students who despite additional support in school and beyond,

face exceptional difficulties coping with Chinese. This syllabus put higher weighting on practical communication skills rather than writing skills, with simpler texts and a smaller word list. The Ministry stated that “the objective of introducing the syllabus [was] to ease the learning process for these students, so as to keep them interested in the subject to facilitate the transmission of culture and values” (Ministry of Education Press Release, 27 October 1999).

In January 2004, the Ministry has also refined the eligibility criteria to allow more students to take the Mother Tongue 'B' syllabus in secondary schools where the students are unable to cope with their Mother Tongue despite putting in the effort. The refinements also allow more students to take Higher Mother Tongue at primary and secondary levels if they have an interest in doing so and will be able to benefit from learning the language at a higher level. The Ministry of Education explains that the changes are meant to promote greater flexibility and choice in the study of Mother Tongue Languages and are a recognition of the changing profile of Singapore society. In 2004, almost half of all Primary 1 students are from English-speaking families. Moreover, from the academic year of 2004, Mother Tongue grades need not be included in the university score although there remains a minimum Mother Tongue grade for university admission. At this time of writing, the Ministry and the schools are also looking into innovative ways to make Chinese language teaching more lively and interesting.

In this brief survey of the teaching of Chinese Language, we have seen that Chinese Language has been traditionally associated with Chinese culture and moral values. Over the years, Singapore has also dealt with the delicate issue of patriotism, downplaying the allegiance towards China and emphasizing nation-building in Singapore. We have also seen how the government has to a large extent successfully replaced the use of Chinese dialects with Mandarin at home while English is increasingly used in the public and private domain. With still a commitment to transmit Chinese values and culture, the government currently faces a challenge to promote Chinese Language learning amidst the rising tide of English usage at home.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE BILINGUAL APPROACH

The "Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language" was announced in January 2002 as a pilot project in four primary schools and one secondary school. This teaching approach was first mooted by Dr Goh Yeng Seng, an Associate Professor at the National Institute of Education in Singapore. Dr Goh is currently the Academic Advisor of the project. I have conducted an informal interview with him to obtain more information about the Bilingual Approach. I am thankful to him for furnishing me with articles in which he was interviewed by the media concerning the approach. The following description of the approach is largely based on these articles as Dr Goh was understandably constrained not to divulge details concerning the approach other than what has been released to the public.

Under this approach, in Chinese language lessons, Chinese is still the main medium of instruction but English is occasionally used to explain Chinese characters and learners are allowed to ask questions using English. Chinese Language teachers who are bilingual in both Chinese Language and English Language are selected to teach in the schools. This approach is a tool meant to help students at the initial stage of learning Chinese language. The Ministry pointed out that the use of English would be gradually reduced when the pupils who use Bilingual Approach as a supplementary approach to learn Chinese move to Primary 3. This is to ensure that they will be able to do as well as pupils not on the Bilingual Approach (Ministry of Education Press Release, 23 February 2004). It aims to help students who come from English-speaking home environments and face extreme difficulties in learning Chinese.

An evaluation of the pilot project by the Ministry of Education at the end of 2003 revealed that the primary school pupils showed more enthusiasm during Chinese lessons and the Bilingual Approach improved communication between the students and the teachers. The result of the project at the secondary school was comparatively less satisfactory because by the time the approach was introduced, the students had lacked knowledge of too huge a pool of Chinese words to begin with. Thus, it was concluded that it was better to adopt the Bilingual Approach as early as possible. The success of this pilot project at the primary schools brought about an extension of the Bilingual Approach to seven more primary schools since

February 2004. The eleven primary schools presently adopting this approach have at least two-thirds of their pupils coming from English-speaking homes.

Despite assurance from the Ministry that the Bilingual Approach would not lower the pupils' Chinese language standard, the approach drew criticism from some members of the public that the use of English would compromise Chinese language standards and that English would be a "crutch" for pupils from English-speaking homes (The Straits Times, 24 February 2004).

1.4 AIM OF STUDY

The study aims to examine responses of Singaporean Chinese to the "Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language" and what it reveals about language ideologies prevalent in Singapore. The language ideologies include issues such as language purity and the relationship between language and culture. Linguistic theories and research (especially in the area of second language acquisition) are drawn upon in the discussion.

1.5 RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

1. The bilingual approach may be a possible way to teach Mandarin as a second language for Singaporean Chinese children.

According to Singapore Population Census 2000, the percentage of ethnic Chinese who have English as their main household language has increased from 19.2% in 1990 to 23.9% in 2000. According to the census, about 35.8% of ethnic Chinese aged 5-14 years old use English as their main household language. Looking at the

trend, there is a possibility that in ten years' time, English will become the main household language of ethnic Chinese here (Ya Zhou Zhou Kan, Volume 17 Issue 20). Thus, increasingly, English will become the first language (L1) of many children and Mandarin will become the second language (L2) since they will be exposed to English since birth. It is therefore necessary to cater to the needs of those who have English as their L1 and Mandarin as their L2.

Generally, the acquisition of one language from birth and the other language after three years old is considered second language acquisition (Foster-Cohen, 2001). We can see this phenomenon in Singapore whereby many households in Singapore only speak English at home and the children's main exposure to the Chinese language comes from schooling. This necessitates a change in pedagogy since we will be dealing with a group of learners for whom Mandarin will be a L2. It is therefore useful to consider the bilingual approach as a possible way of teaching the Chinese language to L2 learners and to gather some of the public's responses towards this approach.

2. Objections to bilingual approach reveal language ideologies.

Singapore's language situation provides a fertile ground for investigating issues related to language identity and culturebecause the term "mother tongue" is highly politicized here. As it is used officially, the term 'mother tongue' refers to the language of one's official ethnic group. Everyone's 'mother tongue' is prescribed according to one's father's ethnicity. For example, the 'mother tongue' of a

'Chinese' is Mandarin, regardless of whether the person speaks the language or identifies with the language. There is also an ideological notion that Race = Language = Culture. Languages that are accorded the status of 'mother tongue' are automatically languages of culture and identity and they are languages of "good values" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a: 240). On the other hand, the government has portrayed English as playing a "neutral role as the language for commerce and for inter-ethnic communication" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a: 254). The notion that mother tongues are languages of culture is evidently present in the findings of my study which showed that the Chinese-educated and the teens viewed Mandarin as a cultural vehicle and they felt that the transmission of Chinese culture would be hampered by the Bilingual Approach. The results of my study will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

For some people in the Chinese community, to use English to help teach the Chinese language would then be tantamount to contaminating the good culture of Chinese and deculturalizing the people. It is also seen as an invasion of the Chinese-using classroom space, especially since English is already the medium of education in all the other subjects in school. Thus, according to media reports (The Straits Times, 6 March 2003 and Ya Zhou Zhou Kan, Volume 17 Issue 20), these members of the Chinese community responded quite negatively to the bilingual approach of using English to help teach Chinese. The language ideologies here seem to be a "purist" view of language (as will be explained in section 2.4) and

language is seen as necessarily linked to race and culture. Studies which explore these language-culture issues will be discussed in Chapter 2. Age-related differences are expected to be observed in relation to these language issues since the older generation were brought up in a different sociolinguistic situation from the younger generation and some had also received education in a different language stream. These will be discussed in Chapter 4.

1.6 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY

The main method used in this study is surveying. Questionnaire surveys investigating responses to the bilingual approach were given out to 130 Singaporean Chinese aged between 13 and 66. These were divided into four main groups:

1) those aged 13-19
2) those aged 20-39
3) those aged 40 and above who were educated in English medium schools
4) those aged 40 and above who were educated in Chinese medium schools

Each group consisted of at least 30 people. The gender ratio in each group was generally balanced. The questionnaire collected information of the respondents' linguistic and educational background as well as other general information. It asked them for their views concerning issues about language and culture, factors contributing to language acquisition and their responses towards the

bilingual approach. The items in the questionnaire included both closed-items (mainly likert-scale items) and open-ended items to elicit more information regarding their views. Elaboration on specific aims of the survey, the construction and administration of the survey are provided in the chapter on Methodology. Besides questionnaires, exploratory face-to-face interviews, press cuttings and policy statements are also referred to in the discussion. A copy of the questionnaire and a collection of press cuttings and policy statements related to the "Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language" are given as Appendices.

1.7 HYPOTHESIS

A higher proportion of the younger generation is likely to react more positively to this bilingual approach. The younger generation is also likely to devalue the role that Chinese language plays in transmitting Chinese culture. However, I would expect that there would still be a high proportion of the younger generation who may be resistant to this approach. This may be due to factors such as a "purist" view of language or a relatively high proficiency in both languages and hence, not seeing the need of catering to those with lower proficiency in one of the languages.

1.8 CLOSING REMARKS

Through analyzing the Bilingual Approach and the responses it evokes in the general public, it is hoped that this study will reveal the intimate interplay between

language ideologies and receptiveness to a language teaching approach. This study is exploratory in nature and is expected to raise more questions than solving them.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

As this study is concerned with responses to the Bilingual Approach, studies which have looked at bilingual teaching approaches in other parts of the world will be examined. These studies are mainly concerned with the functions and effects of the bilingual approach from a pedagogical point-of-view. However, as I have pointed out in Chapter 1, issues other than those related to pedagogy affect people's receptiveness to the Bilingual Approach. Hence, in subsequent sections of this chapter, I will examine topics such as the relationship between language and culture, and language purity, relating them to the Singapore context wherever relevant. Finally, I will look at the findings of a major sociolinguistic survey (Xu et al., 1998) on the Singaporean Chinese community.

2.1 THE BILINGUAL TEACHING APPROACH IN OTHER GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

The Bangor Study (Garrett et al., 1994) looks at Mother Tongue (MT) use in two UK bilingual settings, Welsh/English setting in Wales and Punjabi/English setting in Lancashire. In rural Wales, Welsh has a high status and is the language of instruction in Welsh-medium schools. In Lancashire, Punjabi has a low status and is little used in school. In The Bangor Study, Welsh and Punjabi primary school

children were taught L2 English writing in their respective MTs. The pre-writing activities were conducted in their MTs. These pre-writing activities included brainstorming, discussion, sequencing and formulation of ideas relevant to topic composition.

For each population (Welsh and Punjabi), an experimental group's performance was compared with that of a control group which went through the pre-writing activities in English. For the groups which received MT pre-writing activation, there was a definite improvement in attitudes which involved self, ethnic identity and school. However, language-based attitudes (towards English, mother-tongue and bilingualism) remained unaffected. The effect of policy on attitude is important as "[a]ny policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected." (Lewis, 1981:262). There was no measurable improvement in the writing of the experimental groups. Nevertheless, L2 writing did not deteriorate as a result of using L1. The authors argued that the absence of change in language-based attitudes and L2 writing performance might be due to the short time-span of the experiment (a three-month intervention period) as the attitudes and writing performance might change too slowly for change to be measurable within this period. The fact that the results were largely uniform in Wales and Lancashire suggests that regardless of the status of the MT, as long as it is used to help teach L2, it can improve attitudes, in particular self-esteem and pride in one's culture and identity.

Let us go on to look at the situations in some Southeast Asian countries. James (1996) stated that in Brunei, a great deal of Brunei Malay (the L1 of most Bruneians) is used at school. It is used by teachers (when inspectors' backs are turned) to explain meanings which most Bruneian children do not understand when they are expressed in Bahasa Melayu or English.

Canagarajah's study (1995) looks at the use of L1 in the classes of 24 secondary school ESL teachers in Jaffna (Sri Lanka). The data in this study comes from observations of classroom teaching by the 24 teachers who represent a balanced selection of schools in rural and urban areas in Jaffna. In the study, teachers of English as a second language found to "their surprise and dismay" (Canagarajah 1995: 173) that they were using far more Tamil in their classrooms than they would like. Many of these teachers would have liked the medium of instruction to be 'English only' by their training and preference. They did not realize that they were using Tamil in the classroom until they were pointed to such instances from recorded data. Upon realization, they were usually apologetic and attributed the use of Tamil to the students' low proficiencies in English or the linguistic demands of a particular lesson. As we can see, in both Brunei and Jaffna, it is not an official policy to use L1 to teach L2. Yet teachers of L2 use L1 to do so, consciously or subconsciously. We see that there seems to be a need for using L1 to teach L2 and also that there is a dilemma between what is preferable by policy and what is necessary in practice.

Canagarajah explores the micro- and macro- functions of codeswitching in the classroom. He considers code alternation across utterances, within utterances and borrowings as codeswitching. The micro-functions of codeswitching include classroom management and content transmission. The teacher manages the class by using English for instructing and Tamil for affective expressions and asides. The students are sensitive to this splitting and read the cues of the teacher to orientate their classroom behaviour. To transmit content, the teacher often uses Tamil to define new English vocabulary items and to explain and reinforce what is taught through repetition and reformulation.

The macro-functions of codeswitching include training students for the social and communicative life in the larger society and sustaining the modes of bilingualism in the speech community. The codeswitching is a reflection of how teachers and students manage their identities as members or aspiring members of a cosmopolitan anglicised discourse community and members of the Tamil vernacular community. They use English in situations clearly framed as pedagogical such as interactions strictly demanded by the textbook and lesson. In other situations such as personalized or unofficial interactions, they shift to Tamil to express their vernacular solidarity.

Moreover, as Canagarajah (1995:192) notes, “the flexible use of Tamil enables the class to bridge the gulf between the home and school, cultural knowledge and academic knowledge.” More importantly, codeswitching prepares

the students for the actual form of bilingualism in this society. The use of solely English in the Jaffna community is restricted to highly formal contexts such as formal meetings. As Canagarajah (1995: 192) puts it, "[t]eaching them 'pure' English is misleading or useless, as there are few informal contexts for extensive use of solely English in the contemporary Jaffna society." In fact, he argues that the codeswitched classroom is more in keeping with the principles of communicative approach compared to a legalistic use of English.

Of course, the situations in Brunei and Jaffna are different from that in Singapore in some aspects. The L1 that they are using (Brunei Malay and Tamil) are vernacular languages which are widely used by the populations and comparable in prestige to the L2 (English) (Canagarajah, 1995; James, 1996). This could possibly account for why the use of L1 does not seem to harm learning in the L2 classroom since L2 does enjoy a certain amount of prestige. As for Singapore, the L1 (English for those students from English-speaking families) is higher in prestige to the L2 (Chinese) (James, 1998). So, there is a fear that the use of L1 will threaten the learning of L2. Although the implications of the Brunei and Jaffna studies cannot be totally applied to the Singapore context, there are still insights to be gained from these studies.

For example, these studies point to a need for L1 to be used in teaching L2, whether this need is made official or is consciously recognised among teachers and students. Also, it is noted that in the Jaffna situation, codeswitching in fact prepares

students for the real form of bilingualism in the outside world. Though the form of bilingualism in Jaffna would differ from the one in Singapore, they are similar in the sense that in both areas, there are few informal contexts for the sole use of L2 in the society. In Singapore, the appearance of codeswitched utterances in informal conversations is a common phenomenon and indeed, research has proved codeswitching to be one of the linguistic characteristics of a bilingual (De Houwer, 1995). Hence, it would be more realistic to use codeswitching in the classroom to reflect the linguistic practices of the real world outside of the classroom and make the language that is taught in the classroom more relevant to the learners' lives, rather than just being a 'classroom language'.

Although I have argued that some of the insights from these studies can be applied to Singapore, we must be sensitive to the context specific to Singapore. Savignon (1991:265) puts it clearly, "diverse sociopolitical contexts mandate not only a diverse set of language learning goals, but a diverse set of teaching strategies". As James (1996: 256) concludes, "one should cease to expect imported solutions which do not exist". It is with this in mind that a reasonable portion of the literature review section is devoted to discussing issues specific to the Singapore context.

2.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Before turning our attention to the Singapore context, we must find out what are the stakes involved in adopting the bilingual teaching approach. As the name of the

policy “Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language” suggests, it is meant as a teaching method in education. However, the issues involved in the approach are not purely ‘educational’ or intellectual in nature. Some news articles regarding the bilingual approach as a pilot project in some schools speak of the issues involved in this approach. Many in the Chinese community felt that the approach was a ‘humiliation’ and would only lower the standard of Chinese language further (The Straits Times, 6 March 2003 and Ya Zhou Zhou Kan, Volume 17 Issue 20).

Surely, the issues involved here are more than that of a linguistic nature and indeed the announcement of this pilot project also turned the spotlight on a related topic - what it means to be a Chinese and whether it is mandatory for a Chinese to know Chinese language. Of course, there are no short answers to these issues. However, they are issues that we must address and consider in implementing this approach. In the paragraphs to follow, I will talk about the relationship between language and culture in general and the implications of that relationship in language shift and policy-making in multilingual societies.

Oksaar (1989) shows how bilingual speakers may potentially range across three sets of cultural norms. This is illustrated in Figure 1 (cited in Beardsmore, 1998: 95).

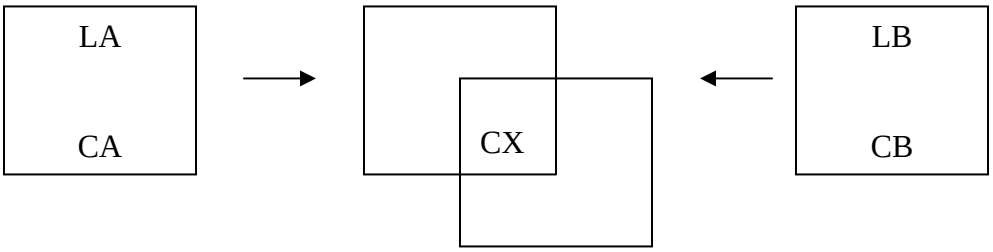


Figure 1. The relationship between language and culture

As illustrated, culture A (CA) corresponds to language A (LA); culture B (CB) to language B (LB) and culture X (CX) , in between the two and containing features of A and B, to a bilingual norm which is neither exclusively A nor B. For example, in Belgium, where French and Dutch are in contact, most French speakers behave in certain Dutch cultural ways, making them identifiably distinct from speakers in France and reflecting a Belgian CX feature resulting from languages/cultures in contact. Dutch politeness requires someone to say the verbal equivalent of "please" when one hands something over to a person. Most Belgian French speakers, regardless of whether they know Dutch or not, say "*S'il vous plait*" (translation equivalent of "please") in the circumstances whereas people from France do not do so. The Belgian use of "*S'il vous plait*" reflects the close relationship between language and culture.

While Oksaar's framework is useful in the sense that it illustrates how new cultures may emerge out of the cultures in contact, it is still rather simplistic in the sense that it assumes that there is a specific culture corresponding to a specific language (e.g. CA-LA and CB-LB) to begin with. As Fishman (2002: 15) points out, "the bulk of the human population was and had always been bi- (or multi-) lingual". As such, we will expect cultures such as CX to be the norm which do not neatly correspond to a single language so to speak. Nevertheless, Oksaar's view does bring out the fluid nature of bilingualism. Bilingual communities infuse different aspects of cultures commonly associated with different languages in a unique combination which may fluctuate over time according to the types and degrees of language contact.

As Beardsmore (1998: 86) emphasizes, "by definition bilingualism is unstable". Bilingualism normally implies linguistic compartmentalization, both on an individual and a societal level. Such compartmentalization shifts across time, according to the needs (social, geographical, economic and political) of both the society and its members. Within the individual, bilingual usage and competence may shift over time. Policy making in the area of bilingual education which reflect language planning priorities, can affect the stability of the compartmentalization, both on individual and societal levels. For example, bilingual education policies which focus on the use of a particular language in an aspect of life may encourage individuals as well as the society in general to use the language in that specific

aspect. However, policy makers are not always clear on the cultural implications of their bilingual programmes and they may not dare to bring these implications out into the open for fear of political ramifications. Indeed cultural issues in bilingualism have been an area of concern for researchers but have been hardly recognized and given due attention in the discussion of bilingual policies by the policy makers. Policy makers would have to consider and address the cultural implications of their bilingual programmes across generations who may differ in cultural perceptions and linguistic profiles. In this study, I will endeavour to delve into the linguistic profiles and cultural perceptions of Singaporean Chinese of different ages and see how these affect their receptiveness towards the bilingual approach of teaching Chinese.

As was mentioned earlier, there may not be a neat correspondence between a language and a culture, especially in the light that multi-cultural societies have become the norm. Fitouri's (1983) identification of four potential types of person provides further support to this view:

1. monocultural monolinguals
2. monocultural bilinguals
3. bicultural bilinguals
4. bicultural monolinguals

(cited in Beardsmore 1998: 87)

Monocultural monolinguals may be very rare as most societies are multilingual. However, a group of speakers in some multicultural societies may still choose to confine themselves to their own world and ignore the cultural and linguistic input from other groups. In Singapore, this may be the least significant group as the nature of the population being confined to a small area and the government policies (e.g. in areas such as housing and education) make it very difficult to totally ignore the cultural and linguistic input from other groups. 86% of Singaporeans live in public housing flats (Ministry of National Development). The Ethnic Integration Policy maintains prescribed block and neighbourhood proportions for each ethnic group in public housing estates (Housing Development Board). With such a policy, Singaporeans of different ethnic groups do come into contact with one another in their living vicinity. Furthermore, from 1987 onwards, the Ministry of Education decided to teach English as the first language in all schools and officially ended the four streams of education (Xu & Li, 2002). With the closure of ethnic schools, children from all ethnic groups attend the same national schools with their Mother Tongues taught as a second language.

Monocultural bilinguals tend to be adult learners of foreign languages studying in the home country. This category may be applicable to some foreigners who are studying in Singapore who develop dual language abilities but stick rigidly to monocultural values and attitudes.

Bicultural bilinguals have bilingual competence such that they can function in two linguistic communities and can appreciate the culture of both groups. This group exists in Singapore, though the worry is that their bilingual and bicultural competence may not be high enough. Presently, the ideal aim for Singapore's government is to increase the number of bicultural bilinguals. In a speech given at the International Conference on National Boundaries and Cultural Configurations, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew expressed that Singapore needs "a bilingual as well as bicultural group of key players" (23 June 2004). This holds true especially with regards to the Chinese culture and Indian culture since China and India are rising economies in the world (The Straits Times, 2 June 2004).

Singapore hopes to produce bilinguals who have knowledge of both the Chinese language (or Indian language) and the English language as well as their respective cultures. For instance, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew mentioned that Singapore's education system must be able to produce about 200 students each year who "must not only be able to speak and write Chinese but also have a deep understanding of its culture and history to be able to connect with China's leaders" (The Straits Times, 2 June 2004). It is worth mentioning that while English has mostly been projected as a 'neutral' language learnt for instrumental purposes, it assumes a 'cultural' association in the sense of "Western economic and managerial practices" (SM Lee's conference speech, 23 June 2004). It seems that the term 'bicultural' now acquires a special meaning as used by the Singapore leader to

specifically refer to the way of doing business. Calls to groom a future group of bicultural elite to engage in China's economy also point out that Singaporean Chinese have not been practising the same Chinese culture as that practised in China. Certainly Singaporean Chinese have not been doing business the way mainland Chinese do. While it is reasonable that Singaporean Chinese have to understand the culture and language of those whom they are doing business with, they have to remember that it is not "their" culture after all. As Singaporeans are encouraged to understand cultures which are not practised in Singapore, there is a need to ensure that Singaporeans still have a strong sense of who they are.

Bicultural monolinguals speak only one language but can appreciate cultural phenomena embedded in two language communities. Second-generation children of migrants to Europe or Australia sometimes belong to this category, in that they do not speak the language of their parents but their home environment contains familiar cultural aspects of behaviour embedded in their parents' language. There may be more bicultural monolinguals in Singapore as the number of English-speaking homes is on the rise and children who come from these homes speak only English. Nevertheless, these monolinguals still practise certain aspects of the culture associated with their "mother tongue". One thing of greater worry to the ethnic communities is that this group of bicultural monolinguals will dwindle in the future and the group of monocultural monolinguals would be on the rise, especially with the emphasis on English language and the Ministry of Education's policy that

the ethnic languages need not be compulsory school subjects for some students. Students who have a clearly diagnosed disability and Singaporeans who re-enter the education system after living overseas for a significant period of time can be considered for an exemption from Mother Tongue (Ministry Of Education Press Release, 9 January 2004).

Beardsmore (1998) adds a fifth category of person, i.e. acculturated bilinguals. They are people who undergo disorientation brought about by cultures in conflict. These people have difficulties reconciling the two cultures embodied in the different languages with which they were confronted. Singapore has exercised great sensitivity in avoiding cultural clashes in its policy and planning. However, as Beardsmore points out, the preoccupations of the Chinese-educated about Chinese cultural values are subtle manifestations of its emergence. There seems to be a desire among the Chinese-educated to reconcile the need for high proficiency in English without significantly losing ethnic language proficiency and cultural values.

Beardsmore (1998) points out that identifying the five types of people in Singapore will be a preliminary step towards investigating the cultural component in language management. It will be helpful to know the nature of their linguistic and cultural competence and their statistical significance in Singapore. The present study does not set out to reach these aims as its priorities lie with looking at the responses of Singaporean Chinese towards the bilingual approach and the reasons underlying their responses. However, it is anticipated that linguistic background

and cultural beliefs, among other things, are factors which will affect their responses. Hence, my study does collect some information regarding their linguistic background and cultural beliefs. It is hoped that these will help to inform future studies which may set out to investigate the linguistic and cultural competence of Singaporean Chinese.

In all, Fitouri's classification has shown us that knowing a language does not necessarily mean that one will know and appreciate the culture associated with that language. Fishman (1989: 471) remarks, "maintenance of the language is not enough for maintenance of the culture, but maintenance of a culture is impossible without maintenance of its language." Fitouri's classification (the group of monocultural bilinguals) seems to support the first part of the quotation that maintenance of the language is not enough for maintenance of the culture. His classification (the group of bicultural monolinguals) seems to call into question the second part of the quotation that maintenance of a culture is impossible without maintenance of its language. Of course, one way of dealing with it is to argue that on an individual level, maintenance of a culture is possible without language maintenance but on a societal level, maintenance of a culture is impossible without maintenance of its language on a long-term basis.

Beardsmore (1998) points out that too much burden has been placed on education to handle cultural issues. As he puts it simply, " Mandarin, Tamil and Malay merely taught as subjects will not prevent further language shift to English"

(1998: 93). He is also quick to add that even a fully developed bilingual programme might not arrest language and cultural shift, though it could delay the process. Indeed, it seems that policy-making in the area of education in Singapore has been used as the battle site for conflicting cultural issues. This is reflected in newspaper articles such as "2B or not 2B, that is the ?: The Politics of Language" (The Sunday Times, 27 October 1991), featuring the conflict between the English-educated and the Chinese-educated. The recent policies of offering an easier syllabus 'B' of mother tongues as subjects in schools and the bilingual approach of teaching mother tongues have aroused fierce debates as well. As Beardsmore (1998: 97) puts it, "there should be no illusions about the role that the schools alone can play". We need to know what educational and social factors the schools can or cannot manipulate to produce maximum bilingual/bicultural outcomes.

With the above point in mind, I turn to Skutnabb-Kangas' (1987) theoretical construct (quoted in Beardsmore, 1998) for analysing the cultural component in bilingual development. Cultural competence is defined as comprising of four components, namely knowledge, feelings, behaviour and metacultural awareness. Knowledge is a cognitive feature which covers information (such as language, history, traditions, institutions) about the relevant cultures. An analysis of textbooks and teaching practice in Chinese language reveals that Singapore has concentrated on this component of cultural competence. However, this is not enough to guarantee cultural affiliation.

Feelings are an affective component which refers to attitudes towards, and identification with, a culture. This component is present in Singapore, especially among the Chinese-educated with regards to the Chinese language and Chinese dialects. However, the shift towards English dominance across generations may weaken the component and may even shift the affective component to English language and its associated culture, especially among the younger generation.

Behaviour refers to the capacity to act in a culturally appropriate way. It is still present in Singapore, transmitted within families. However, with the so-called anglicanization of Singapore society, there is a shift away from traditional Chinese core values, such as filial piety among the Singaporean Chinese here. Metacultural awareness refers to an understanding that cultures are distinct. The multi-ethnic composition of Singapore society makes this awareness inevitable and crucial for societal harmony. In all, Chinese language education in Singapore has been focusing on the knowledge component, in the hope that it will generate the affective and behavioural components as by-products while still maintaining metacultural awareness and respect for other cultures. However, this does not seem to be happening among the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese, especially with regards to the affective and behavioural components, which is an area of concern to the Chinese community here. While this is a legitimate concern, it seems too unrealistic to expect education to resolve the issues.

In conclusion, there are no clear-cut answers with regards to the cultural aspect of bilingual education. What policy-makers and the public need to realize is the scope and limit of what education can and cannot do to resolve these cultural issues and at the same time, to pay attention to other environmental factors to help them achieve their desired goal, if there is a common one to begin with.

2.3 'NEUTRAL LANGUAGE' AND 'MOTHER TONGUE' IN SINGAPORE

Having discussed the complex relationship between language and culture, let us examine how this relationship has been managed and projected in Singapore. A key term to explore is "Mother Tongue" as it is a term often used in Singapore's educational policies.

To different people, the term 'mother tongue' may mean different things. Even in the field of linguistics, there is no single clear notion of 'mother tongue'. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989) list four criteria for the definition of 'mother tongue'. They are shown in the table below.

Criteria	**Definition**
origin	the language(s) one learned first
competence	the language(s) one knows best
function	the language(s) one uses most
identification (internal) identification (external)	the language(s) one identifies with the language(s) one is identified as a native speaker by others

Table 1 Definitions of Mother Tongue(s)

(Skutnabb-Kangas 1981:84 quoted in Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1989: 453)

Although Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson admit that the same person can have different mother tongues, depending on which definition is used, they seem to give preference to two particular definitions. They state that "[i]t is with reference to the definitions by origin and identification that the concept 'mother tongue' should be understood in any declaration of linguistic rights…" (1989: 455). They define mother tongue primarily as the language(s) one has learnt first and identifies with.

They claim that the criteria of competence and function are the results of political decisions. A person may know another language better than his mother tongue because he has not been offered the opportunity to learn the mother tongue in institutional settings. Similarly, a person may use another language more often than his mother tongue because he may not be able to choose freely what language(s) he would like to use in institutions. Although such concerns which focus on the subjugation of the speakers may be legitimate, this form of argument may be rather circular. The same argument can be applied to the definitions based on *origin* and *identification*. The language(s) that one learned first is/are due to social circumstances which are consequences of political decisions as well. Similarly, the criteria of identification can be seen as a result of political decisions as well. The language(s) that one identifies with or is identified as a native speaker by others may be dependent on the language(s) that one are exposed to in his surroundings and other people's perceptions which are subjective. If we were to employ Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson's criterion of external identification in

defining the mother tongue, it would raise various problems. For example, others may not identify a group of people as native speakers of a language whereas the group may consider the language as their mother tongue. As Gupta (1994: 18) notes, "[t]here is a widespread use of the term 'native speaker of English' (not only in Singapore) to mean a speaker of an 'old' variety of English, which as applied can lead to a distinction between white 'native speakers' and non-white 'non-native' speakers, regardless of personal biography." Gupta (1994) also points out that the concept of native speaker is problematic outside a monolingual context. For example, there are no archetypical Singaporean native speakers of any language in Singapore. Therefore, Singaporeans often hesitate to identify themselves as native speakers of any language, even though they may be very proficient in the language. As I have shown, the definition of 'mother tongue' is problematic in the field of linguistics.

The issue of 'mother tongue' is further confounded in the Singapore context. Laying aside the above-mentioned problems with the notion of 'mother tongue' in linguistics, following the definitions based on *origin* and *identification*, Colloquial Singapore English (CSE) may be considered a 'mother tongue' for many Singaporean speakers of English. Following Gupta's definition, I am using CSE to refer to the contact variety of English which has features from other languages used in Singapore. In using the term CSE, I am distinguishing it from the popular term Singlish, commonly used for the English used by people who have poor proficiency

in English. Proficient speakers of English may choose to speak CSE in an informal context. Gupta (1994: 7) comments that "[n]early all those children who have learnt English from birth will have [CSE], rather than StdE, as their native language.". This is because it is usually CSE that is spoken in the home to young children, so CSE is the language they acquire first. In terms of identification, Gupta (1994: 48) also remarks "[CSE] is coming to perform in Singapore the role of an identity marker rather than that of a half-learnt version of Standard English." CSE has become a language of primary expression to identify with a community and to express solidarity functions. CSE expresses "national, rather than ethnic, identity, and is now the major inter-ethnic link language" (Gupta, 1994: 50). Nevertheless, the worry is that the native speakers of CSE in Singapore may not have a command of Standard English (Gupta, 1994). I shall not dwell on this concern as it is not the focus of this study. For the purpose of this study, we just need to be mindful that there exist native speakers of English in Singapore, regardless of which variety they speak.

By Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson's definitions of 'mother tongue', CSE can be a possible candidate for consideration as a 'mother tongue' of many speakers in Singapore since almost half of all Primary 1 pupils speak English at home (The Straits Times, 24 February 2004). However, the Singapore government may not be keen to acknowledge CSE as a 'mother tongue' which may in turn affect the speakers' own identification with CSE. In fact, as Gupta (1994: 14-15)

points out, “Singaporeans almost never identify themselves as *native speakers of English*. This term is usually reserved for a white person from a traditionally English-speaking country, regardless of personal history”. This may be a result of the Singapore government’s policy of allocating languages according to ethnicities such that Singaporeans, by virtue of their ethnicity, can never legitimately claim themselves to be native speakers of English. As Gupta (1994: 117) notes, “[l]anguage is highly politicized in Singapore.” Thus, in understanding the government’s language policy, we need to be aware that “terms acquire a particular definition within the sociopolitical system” (Gupta, 1994: 118). Of course, the term ‘native speaker of English’ is used to distinguish between white ‘native’ speakers and non-white ‘non-native’ speakers not only by the Singapore government. On a visit to Singapore in 1985-86, Sir Randolph Quirk referred to Singapore as having ‘English as a foreign language’ and to Singaporeans as ‘non-native speakers’ (quoted in Gupta, 1994: 18). Linguists as well as politicians tend to associate ‘mother tongue’ or ‘native language’ with ethnicities. This assumption has to be questioned especially in multilingual countries, in which people may have acquired more than one language from birth and these languages may be different from the ones commonly associated with their ethnicities.

As it is used officially in Singapore, the term ‘mother tongue’ refers to the language of one’s official ethnic group, prescribed according to one’s father’s ethnicity (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a). For example, the ‘mother tongue’ of a ‘Chinese’

is Mandarin, regardless of whether the person is a speaker of the language or identifies with the language. Within this framework, English (in this case, CSE) cannot be regarded as a mother tongue. There are only three official 'mother tongues' in Singapore, which are Mandarin, Malay and Tamil since there are only three broad divisions of ethnic groups in Singapore (the Chinese, the Malays and the Indians). As Bokhorst-Heng (1999a: 235) points out, "the development of language meaning in Singapore is much intertwined with the imagining of the nation…this discourse is more about homogeneity within each ethnic community rather than heterogeneity within the nation".

The Singapore government also presents the cultural and identity arguments in its definition of 'mother tongue'. However, it does not give its people the choice to decide which language(s) they identify with. The arguments are that languages which are accorded the status of 'mother tongue' are automatically languages of culture and identity and they are languages of "good values" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a: 240). The problem with this is that Mandarin was prescribed as the "mother tongue" for the ethnic Chinese, even though Mandarin was identified as such for only 0.1 percent of the Chinese community in the 1957 census (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a). As Bokhorst-Heng (1999a: 250) notes, it was dialect-speaking parents and grandparents that played an active role in transmitting culture and values and "dialects, not Mandarin, were seen as necessary for intimacy, for culture and roots, for family and clan identity, and as the true mother-tongue". The aim of prescribing

Mandarin as the 'mother tongue' for the ethnic Chinese was to unify the Chinese community (Puroshotam, 1998). According to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong who gave a speech for the Speak Mandarin Campaign (SMC) aimed at encouraging Singaporean Chinese to speak Mandarin, "[f]or the Chinese community our aim should be a single people, speaking the same primary language, that is, Mandarin, possessing a distinct culture and a shared past…" (SMC speech, 1991).

It is problematic when one considers the logic of it. A language is prescribed as your 'mother tongue' and you are supposed to identify with it and its associated culture. Lee Kuan Yew states that "[t]he ultimate test *(of the success of the SMC)* is whether Mandarin is spoken at home between parents and their children. That is the meaning of mother tongue" (The Straits Times, 26 October 1981). Instead of allowing free choice of your 'mother tongue' on the grounds of the language which you use at home and identify with, the government urges you to use the prescribed 'mother tongue' at home and identify with it. This is not logical and it could account for the lack of interest in learning Chinese (especially before the rise of China) among Singaporean Chinese as there may be no personal motivation to learn it on the grounds of identity and culture.

On the other hand, the government has portrayed English as playing a "neutral role as the language for commerce and for inter-ethnic communication" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a: 254). To recognize English as a 'mother tongue' would then deculturalize the people. These sentiments are sometimes reflected in the

leaders' speeches. In his 1984 campaign speech, the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew made the strong statement that "English [would] not be emotionally acceptable as our mother tongue" (Campaign speeches, 1989). Despite the trend that English (in particular, CSE) is growing rapidly as a home language, the government remains unwilling to accept English as a mother tongue. As used officially, the term 'mother tongue' in Singapore refers to neither the language which one learned first (definition based on *origin*) nor the language which one identifies with (definition based on *identification*).

At his swearing in as Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong expressly said that "[t]o enhance our identity and cultural values, we must teach our mother tongue… so that our children will learn to love the language…to impart values, so that we will remain Asian and not become Westernised and de-culturalised." (28 November 1990). One point to note, however, is that it is not clear what being "Asian" means and it seems that the Singapore leaders use it as a broad term to refer to being a "Chinese", "Malay" and "Indian".

Moreover, it is interesting that the three above-mentioned cultures are transplants in Singapore. Each of these cultures is not a microcosm of the value systems present in China, the Malay archipelago and India respectively (James, 1998). Although there are some shared values and moral beliefs, they may not be identical. The problem is compounded by the fact that for the teaching of the 'mother tongue'—Mandarin, Tamil and Malay, Singapore looks towards the

traditions and cultures of China, India and neighbouring Malay-dominated states for her models of enculturation respectively and for the validation of the English language, Singapore looks to Britain (James, 1998). It seems that we are not very certain about which 'culture(s)' we are talking about when we speak of 'mother tongue'. If the government refers to the 'culture(s)' in China, Malay-dominated states and India, it is inevitable that problems will arise and people will face difficulties in identifying with their prescribed 'mother tongues' since these cultures are transplants in Singapore and hence some of its characteristics here would be different from those in other countries. Another related issue is that even in terms of teaching materials and teaching methods, the Ministry of Education should be careful to adopt only suggestions from studies done in compatible settings to that in Singapore and not to over-rely on those in other countries such as China since the linguistic and cultural profiles of the people are different.

Indeed, there are bound to be problems when the culture(s) commonly associated with our 'mother tongue(s)' are not identical to the ones in Singapore. Despite difficulties in establishing the exact nature of the 'culture' we are talking about, the "one race = one language = one culture" equation is here to stay. This holds true for all the ethnic communities over here. This can be seen from Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong's SMC speech in 1988, through which he expressed that the government encouraged Malay and Indian cultural organizations to organize their respective language and cultural activities. Goh Chok Tong also

expressed similar sentiments in his 1991 SMC speech by saying that "we *(representing the government)* want all ethnic communities to preserve their language, culture and values". In addition, the denial of English as a legitimate mother-tongue in Singapore has been challenged, especially by the English-educated Chinese. This is manifested in some of the headlines in the Straits Times, "Why Mandarin is not my mother-tongue" (The Straits Times, 23 February 1992) and "English: A Singaporean mother-tongue?" (The Straits Times, 14 June 1994).

The polarization of the functions of English and the "mother tongue" languages reveals a selective understanding of language (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a). With respect to English, the government's view seems to be that language can be separated from culture such that it is possible to learn the language and reap its benefits without accepting its culture whereas for "mother tongues", language necessarily embodies culture. This is clearly seen in the slogan of the Speak Mandarin campaign of 1985 – "Mandarin is Chinese". Other campaign slogans include "hua ren hua yu" (literally "Chinese people, Chinese language") and "If you are a Chinese, make a statement— in Mandarin". In the most recent Speak Mandarin Campaign of 2004, the English slogan is "Mandarin: Window to Chinese culture". From the English slogan, it seems that the government has yielded on its stance that Mandarin embodies culture since Mandarin is projected as a bridge to Chinese culture instead of representing Chinese culture itself. The Chinese campaign slogan says "hua ren • hua yu • hua wen" (literally "Chinese people •

Mandarin • Chinese language") which seems to insist more on the quintessential relationship between language and race and culture. A possible reason for the difference in tone of the English slogan and the Chinese slogan is that the English slogan is supposed to target Singaporean Chinese who are English- educated and they may not subscribe to the view that a Chinese necessarily must speak Mandarin. Instead, by softening the tone, the English slogan may appeal more to the English-educated. Nevertheless, it remains that the government still retains the ideas of a one-to-one direct relationship between race, language and culture but does not promote it overtly to the English-educated.

Besides the issue of the relationship between 'mother tongue' and culture, another contentious issue is that regarding the 'neutrality' of the English language. As James (1998: 99) points out, "[i]n the Singapore system, the English language is the most visible and tangible symbol of a colonial past… [i]t remains in modern Singapore as the language of power". The English language in Singapore is not neutral. It plays a gate-keeping function at the examinations and employment. It serves as the doorway to economic prosperity. James (1998) also observes that science and technology are themselves potent transmitters of a Western ideology and lifestyle. Through the survey in this study which reports on the attitudes of the public towards English language and Chinese language, we shall see that the public may link certain characteristics to the two languages respectively. In a way, this shows that like the Chinese language, the English language is not neutral. By

presenting the English language as a ‘neutral’ language and devoid of any culture, Singapore has built in a mechanism for the disjunction between language and culture, which is bound to create some problems for English speakers who have operated in English since their early years of socialization.

It is interesting to note, however, that the government allows English to carry cultural meaning only when the cultural values associated with English are decadent such as the “mindless pop culture of the West” (The Straits Times, 15 January 1979). As Bokhorst-Heng (1999a) remarks, it is difficult to completely divorce culture from language and yet it is difficult to sustain the argument that language inherently embodies culture. The complexity of the relationship between language and culture increases the challenge of language planning in a multilingual society, where many languages and cultures are in interaction. While the solution is not easily found (especially in the context of an ever-changing world), it is unwise to reduce the complexity of the relationship by relegating it to a direct one-to-one relationship such as “one race= one language = one culture”.

Problems may arise with policies that allocate resources based on the above-mentioned equation when a language seems to provide greater advantages over other languages. The rise of China has brought about a correlation between the knowledge of Chinese language and economic opportunities in the Chinese mainland. Now there seems to be a greater interest among Singaporean Chinese for their children to learn the Chinese language. The rise of China’s economy supplies

another argument for learning the Chinese language, i.e. the economic gains to be earned from successful business deals with China. However, it is interesting that this seems to provide a stronger impetus for Singaporeans to learn Chinese language rather than the cultural argument used by the government. The question is whether the reverse is also true when there is no longer an economic incentive to learn the Chinese language. This 'economic' value of Chinese language also indicates that the 'mother tongue' is definitely not simply related to the cultures and values of an ethnic group, in fact, it is simplistic to just equate a language to playing a particular role in society. Each language has a potential to become the language of commerce and we should not deceive ourselves in deifying a language to be intrinsically linked to a particular culture and segregate it to playing that role alone. In fact, segregating the Chinese language to playing the role of transmitting culture and values to the ethnic Chinese may cause unhappiness among the other ethnic groups who may want to benefit from the economic values of learning the language but are unable to do so because they are not Chinese (Puroshotam, 1998).

As Puroshotam (1998: 225) points out, "the interest in one's 'original' culture, language, and so forth, is certainly not original in the sense of being essentially real" but it is a social construction in Singapore to 'discipline' difference. By making people of an ethnic group learn a common language and asking them to identify with a specific culture, this eliminates the range of

differences within each ethnic group and it organizes the society into manageable communities.

Bokhorst-Heng (1999a: 262) notes that "[t]he Singaporean nation, by consequence, is a patchwork of internally homogenized communities". Of course, the preference for homogenized communities is not specific to Singapore. In fact, "linguistic diversity is taken by many analysts as problematic and as a challenge to the nationalist agenda" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999b: 43). This is in contrast to post-colonial identities in post-modernist cultural studies where in difference is liberation. In Singapore, the difference is 'disciplined' to define what a person 'essentially' or 'racially' is. Although I agree with Puroshotam that the Singapore government has used 'race' to discipline difference in Singapore and "racial difference is exacerbated by the way Language thematises it" (Puroshotam, 1998: 229), I am not saying that this situation is unique to Singapore and that this is the result of elite constructions alone. Members of society play a part too by upholding these ideas, consciously or otherwise. What we need to recognize is that linguistic ideologies can be interweaved with political ideologies for the purpose of societal streamlining, of which members of the public may be players involved in its hegemony. According to James (1998: 105), "[t]he relationship between language and meanings is constructed by the society through the linguistic policies and realized through the education system…".

Indeed, the ideological nature of language can be seen through language policies. Language policy can be characterized as "a deliberate attempt at social change in language behaviour by a decision-making administrative structure" (Paulston, 1973: 1921). Pendley (1983) describes the relationship between language policy and social transformation in Singapore. He comments that "[b]oth ideology and language policy… [are] attempts by the political leadership to alter the communicative structure of society, to increase its control over the channels and media… and to influence the consciousness of individuals in ways which are consistent with the dominant goals of social transformation" (quoted in Bokhorst-Heng, 1999b: 46). As argued by James (1998), Singapore gives little place for individual agency. People are selectively constrained on linguistic "choices", in and by the process of their creation. Pendley's point regarding the government's attempt to influence the individuals' consciousness suggests that language policy does not involve simply a top-down approach from the authorities. Though the approach is predominantly top-down in style, more is at work than simply this. In fact, the individuals' consciousness may be influenced (in the desired direction) by the policy and this could be used as a factor to legitimize the policy further. Through this study of language attitudes among Singaporean Chinese towards bilingualism, we shall see to what extent some members of the public's ways of thinking are already influenced by language policies that the Singapore government

has been adopting, especially in the ways these respondents define themselves in terms of their 'mother tongue(s)'.

However, it is important to qualify that language policy does not always lead to predicted outcomes. As Gopinathan (1998: 20-21) puts it, "[s]ocial evolution often creates new fault lines or strengthens old ones and thus, the balancing of fundamental and competing claims must often be re-negotiated anew". Hence, we need to have a dynamic view of language management and language issues as there are changing power relationships and access to resources (Gopinathan, 1998).

In this section, what I have shown is that the notion of 'mother tongue' is problematic on its own. This is aggravated when I consider the notion of 'mother tongue' as used in the Singapore context by its leaders. The official definition of 'mother tongue' in Singapore is based along ethnic lines and 'mother tongues' are imposed upon people in Singapore. The prescription of 'mother tongues' based on the equation "a race = a culture = a language" (Bokhorst-Heng, 1999a) is bound to create some problems for the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese whose 'mother tongue(s)' (according to the definitions of *origin* and *identification*, in particular, internal identification) do not correspond to their ethnicity.

As observed by Puroshotam (1998), Singapore is a nation being divided into an increasing number of communities. The divide is no longer just between the English-educated and the Chinese-educated. According to MP Dr. Ow Chin Hock,

there exists the “English-educated Chinese, the Chinese-educated, and the less-educated, dialect-speaking Chinese” (The Straits Times, 16 October 1990). My view is that even among the English-educated Chinese, there are subgroups such as the English-educated monolinguals and the English-educated bilinguals. These groups can be further divided into subdivisions which have different cultural affinities. In fact, as discussed in the previous section, there are at least five types of people (monolinguals/bilinguals) in Singapore. Puroshotam notes that the divisions require different political directions and related disciplining which will institute racial divide in Singapore even more. While I cannot be certain whether this will institute specifically ‘racial’ divide in Singapore even more, it is clear that the discipline via ‘race’ in Singapore is becoming inadequate to deal with the changing composition of its people. This implies that educational policies cannot be planned with reference to each racial group as each group is increasingly heterogeneous in terms of linguistic abilities and cultural affinities.

Moreover, as pointed out by James (1998: 115), “if education and schooling have to do with empowerment, then it is imperative that politicians, administrators and educators make more equitable changes to education”. James mentioned this in the context of streaming and examination practices here which performed “gate-keeping roles” and created “cohorts with specific abilities and disabilities” (1998: 115) We can apply her call for more equitable changes to education to be made in

the context of different groups in Singapore with varying linguistic profiles and needs.

2.4 LANGUAGE PURITY

As I have pointed out in section 2.2, there is not necessarily a neat correspondence between language and culture. In fact, I have shown how the relationship between language and culture has been projected in Singapore in section 2.3. The relationship between language and culture is complex and is subject to other factors in the society. After all, language itself is a social phenomenon as it arises out of the need to communicate among members of the society. Durkheim recognized that

> "every social norm had within itself not only an indication of what was considered socioculturally 'expected' of members in good-standing, but also a behavioural aspect according to which members were judged to be good, proper, decent, i.e., morally proper or improper according to sanctified traditions and standards."
>
> (quoted from Fishman, 2002: 16)

What is pertinent to our discussion is that since languages constitute the main symbol systems of all human cultures, languages have often come to be considered as holy too. As a result, a language may have the 'holy' attribute ascribed to it by native speakers and incorporated normatively and moralistically into their communicative conventions. As Fishman (2002: 17) claims, "[t]here is no human

culture without language and no human culture without the notion of the holy. As a result, these two notions co-occur and are joined in many cultures". Fishman discusses different types of holy languages. For the purpose of this study, I will only explore one type of holy languages as it is most relevant to our discussion.

Fishman points out that a language may be ascribed the attribute of 'holiness' via ethnic kinship identity. Increasingly, vernaculars are coming to be regarded as holy due to their association with "heightened ethnic contrastivity, historical ethnic grievances and traditional ethnic identity" (2002: 19). Such developments are usually communally patterned rather than individually patterned and hence, often prompt positive ethnolinguistic consciousness for the "ethnic mother tongue", even long after an intrusive language has become the language used in everyday life. Expressions of endearment and intimacy, usually reserved for the closest kin, are transferred to the ethnicity-linked language, even when its secular usage is becoming less and many of its former secular functions are being discharged by another language. Hence, there are bilingual populations in which one language is viewed (consciously or unconsciously) as much more sanctified than the other. Fishman refers to Irish and English as an example. For "true believers", Irish is holy whereas English is not.

As Fishman notes, most of the growth in language sanctity claims has occurred in the non-West countries within the past half century. This is to resist the Western-derived erosions of local life and identity. In the process, the local

language comes to be viewed as “the genuine spirit of the people”, a “mystic essence” enabling them “to remain true to their own way of life”, a “sacred trust and responsibility”, a “key to preserving their own authenticity” etc. (2002: 20). As I read these descriptions, Chinese language in Singapore seems to have some attribute of ‘holiness’, at least among some of the older local Chinese community. Often, in the promotion of Chinese language to encourage the public to learn it, Chinese is appealed to as the ethnic mother tongue and a key to preserving the Chinese culture. In the tide of globalisation, Chinese Singaporeans are also exhorted to keep their “traditional Confucian values” to prevent Western erosions of Chinese values and culture.

In his chapter, Fishman also looks at the consequences of language sanctity beliefs. Firstly, they have mobilizing, rallying and energizing potentials. As a result, there may be language maintenance consciousness raising, local vernacular status elevation and activation of popular ethnic consciousness. Secondly, they may complicate language modernization efforts, constraining them to be “authentic”, purist and indigenous in orientation. Thirdly, bilingual populations may become conflicted as to how holiness (represented by the ethnic language) and power (represented by the more ‘modern’ language) are to be separated. Lastly, it will make the two languages less similar, counteracting the tendency for languages in contact to interact with each other lexically, phonologically, grammatically and semantically.

At this point, it seems prudent to mention that Fishman employed the term "purist" in a similar sense as that expressed in the working definition provided by George Thomas in his book *Linguistic Purism* (1991). As Thomas admits, there is little agreement about what "purism" is. Combining features of various definitions provided by different schools of linguists, Thomas (1991:12) defines "purism" as "the manifestation of a desire on the part of a speech community (or some section of it) to preserve a language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable (including those originating in dialects, sociolects and styles of the same language). It may be directed at all linguistic levels but primarily the lexicon." Although purism is used to describe the antipathy to foreign elements (e.g. loan words) in the native language, Thomas notes that puristic attitudes are also displayed in bilingual communities.where the younger generation often has severely restricted command of the native language such that they employ a mixture of both languages. As a result, this causes irritation to members of the community who have full command of the native language and their reaction is often "voiced in puristic terms" (Thomas, 1991: 128).

The above-mentioned points clearly apply to the Chinese language in Singapore. There is an awareness among the government leaders and the older Chinese community that there is a need to maintain and promote Chinese language to the younger generation. However, the approaches adopted are mainly purist in orientation. This can be seen in the vehement objections to the bilingual approach

of teaching Chinese. For some, there is a need to come to terms with the differences in functions and status of Chinese language and English language. An attempt to make the two languages less similar is also seen in the objections to codeswitching in the classrooms during Chinese language lessons. Fishman also points out that since sanctity is upheld by and linked to major powerful societal institutions, it has extraordinary staying power.

In the above discussion, I have shown how Chinese language in Singapore may have been ascribed some form of 'holy' attribute. One of its consequences is that it will result in a purist orientation in language modernization efforts. Language teaching cannot be amply considered as a language modernization effort as it does not involve components such as corpus planning for the codification of languages. Nevertheless, the 'authentic' and purist orientation is likely to be manifested in some of the responses towards the bilingual approach of teaching Chinese language. It is relevant to find out how prevalent the sanctity belief is among Chinese Singaporeans and how it would affect their receptiveness to the bilingual approach of teaching Chinese.

2.5 RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AMONG SINGAPOREAN CHINESE

As this study aims to find out the language ideologies of Singaporean Chinese through examining their responses to the Bilingual Approach (refer section 1.4), it is helpful for us to consider previous research done concerning the Singapore

Chinese community and their language attitudes. Due to space constraints, I will only look at Xu et al.'s (1998) study, the first study to conduct a large-scale survey on Singaporean Chinese.

There was a major sociolinguistic survey on the Singapore Chinese community conducted in mid-1996. The goals included "(a) updating the sociolinguistic profile of the Singapore Chinese community, and (b) evaluating the impact of language planning in Singapore" (Xu et al., 1998: 133). The present discussion will focus on the key findings of the survey relevant to my study.

The survey was done through questionnaires and observations. As Xu et al. (1998: 135) claim, "[t]he subjective reactions and self-reports were validated with unobtrusive observations of actual behaviours." More than 4000 questionnaires were distributed in selected schools, industrial and residential estates and Chinese clan associations. Out of these, 2778 usable ones constituted the database for the survey. These questionnaires were re-sampled to form a smaller sample of 915 people which closely resembled the socio-demographic composition of the total Chinese population in Singapore.

The questionnaire asked for self-reports on language use in different settings and different communicative functions. It also invited the respondents to compare English and Chinese for instrumental and affective properties. Other questions included topics such as code-mixing, functions of Mandarin, the passing on of dialects to the next generation and information about the respondents. At the

same time, fieldworkers were sent out to the four most populated residential areas to conduct observation on Singaporean Chinese. 3440 people were observed for their language choice at several public places such as banks, hawker centres etc. The observation survey basically confirmed the questionnaire findings.

The study showed that 40% of the Chinese population usually used two or more languages with the same interlocutors and in the same settings. The combinations of multi-code use (use of two or more languages) include "Mandarin and Dialects" mode (about 15%), "English and Mandarin" mode (about 10%), "English, Mandarin and Dialects" mode (about 5%) and "English and Dialects" mode (about 5%). As Xu et al. (1998: 138) suggest, "[t]he rates of multi-code use answers may well indicate the extent of code-mixing practices among Chinese Singaporeans." Since code-mixing has probably become a feature in the spoken discourse of 40% of the Chinese population, we should address this phenomenon in our teaching of languages in Singapore schools and probably devise ways to use it as a resource.

The study found that "the population as a whole [was] still predominantly Chinese-speaking, in spite of the significant shift towards English in the last few decades." (Xu et al., 1998: 135) Usage indices for the different domains of family, friendship, work, government etc. were calculated using answers from the questionnaires. The average index for Mandarin was 64%, English 45% and Dialects 34%. For example, 64% of the Chinese population used Mandarin as at

least one of the language varieties for their daily activities. The indices for the different domains show the distribution of dialects in more private domains such as family and the distribution of Mandarin and English in more public domains such as business. English was more associated with more formal occasions while Mandarin with more informal occasions.

Questions on attitudes towards Mandarin and English asked respondents to compare both languages for being a cordial, friendly, pleasant to hear, easy to learn, prestigious, authoritative and useful language. Respondents could choose either language or answer “Both”. More respondents selected “Both” rather than either of the languages as the answer to five of the questions. Most respondents chose Mandarin for being an easy to learn and cordial language. The majority of Chinese population found learning English tough. On the other hand, around 20% of them felt that learning Mandarin was more difficult than learning English. The study also concluded that the majority of Chinese Singaporeans felt a closeness towards Mandarin that they did not towards English.

In addition, the results showed a polarization of the characteristics associated with English and Mandarin in terms of their instrumentality and affectivity. Mandarin was considered by most Singaporean Chinese as a solidarity language (in terms of cordiality and friendliness) but a smaller number regarded it in terms of prestige and authority. The majority of Singaporean Chinese regarded

English as a language of power whereas fewer people associated it with affective qualities.

Respondents were also asked to identify the most important use of Mandarin. 5 options were made available for them to choose from. The results are in descending order: Inheriting cultural values and traditions (36%), Communication across dialect groups (35%), Showing a characteristic of Chinese Singaporeans (17%), Facilitating the learning of Chinese in school (9%) and Doing business abroad (3%). The top 2 ranked answers revealed that Singaporean Chinese shared the government aims of breaking down dialectal barriers of communication and recognized Mandarin as a cultural vehicle for the Chinese. It is interesting that 17% of the respondents chose the function of Mandarin as identifying Chinese Singaporeans whereas twice the number of respondents chose the function of inheriting cultural values and traditions. It could mean that more people saw Mandarin as associated with Chinese culture rather than with the identity of Chinese Singaporeans per se. The fact that only 3% of the respondents chose the function of Mandarin as a trade language means that at that time of the survey, using Mandarin to do business abroad was a remote idea.

Besides reporting on the major trends of language use and attitudes among the Singapore Chinese, the study also investigated social differentiation of the respondents' behaviour and attitudes. This was based on the unadjusted sample of 2778 questionnaires as "it [was] necessary to have a large database to reveal

contrasts between some proportionately small but sociologically important groups" (Xu et al., 1998: 154). The factors of gender, age, occupation, education level, education stream, income and residential properties were included in the test. Of these, the language stream of education was the most differentiating factor. As Xu et al. (1998: 148) put it, "[t]he historical chasm between the English-educated and the Chinese-educated is still in force in influencing language use and language attitudes." The English-educated tended to use English while the Chinese-educated tended to use Mandarin in all situations. Regarding the questions on language characteristics, the English-educated and the Chinese-educated were the ones most in favour of English and Mandarin respectively. In my study, I would see whether the stream of education affects how people respond to the bilingual approach of using English to help teach Chinese.

Besides the factor of education stream, the factor of age was proven to be robust with the language attitudes as well. The youngest (<25) group was the only age group which believed that English was more authoritative than Mandarin and the only age group which did not find Mandarin more useful than English. The oldest group (>60) was the only age group which found learning English harder than Mandarin. The youngest and the 35-44 age groups were the only ones who did not feel that Mandarin was more cordial than English. The youngest and the oldest groups also perceived the most important function of Mandarin as "Inheriting

cultural values and traditions" while other groups (25-34, 35-44 and 45-60) did not think so.

The study drew the conclusion that with 90% of the Singapore Chinese population viewing Mandarin as a cordial and friendly language and Mandarin as the language most widely used in the Singapore Chinese community, "the goal of making Mandarin the language of the Singapore Chinese community has been decisively reached." (Xu et al., 1998: 151). However, we need to bear in mind that 39% of the respondents considered themselves as "mainly Chinese-educated", 26% "mainly English-educated" and 29% "both English and Chinese-educated". Due to the fact that nearly 40% of the respondents were mainly Chinese-educated, it may be unfair to draw the conclusion that Mandarin has become the language of the Singapore Chinese community as there is probably a bias in terms of respondents' backgrounds in the language stream of education.

Despite the possible limitation that I have pointed out, Xu et al.'s (1998) study remains an outstanding study in terms of its scope and scale. The present study has also benefited from their study by adapting their questions on language characteristics in my questionnaire. While Xu et al.'s (1998) study was interested in the language use and language attitudes of the Singapore Chinese community, my study is interested mainly in the language attitudes of Singaporean Chinese. It has to be also stated that the current study does not attempt to reach the scale of Xu et al.'s (1998) study as resources are limited and it is difficult to obtain in-depth

responses to the Bilingual Approach from so many people. Nevertheless, some of the issues investigated in both studies may overlap and help illuminate one another. With this in mind, I will return to some of Xu et al.'s (1998) findings in the discussion of my results (refer Chapter 4).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

A brief description of the study's methodology has been provided in section 1.6. In this chapter, I will expand on the various instruments used in the study, including questionnaires, exploratory interviews, press cuttings and policy statements.

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to collect a reasonable quantity of quick responses to the bilingual approach, questionnaires constitute a large part of the research data in this study. However, before designing the questionnaires, exploratory interviews were conducted with eight people, two from each of the four groups of Singaporean Chinese (13-19, 20-39, English-educated aged 40 and above, Chinese-educated aged 40 and above) so that I could find out some of the concerns regarding this approach and refine the research questions.

3.1.1 EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWS

The interview respondents were people whom I (the interviewer) knew on an informal basis, either as friends or friends' parents. Of course, this may lead to a bias in the sample of interviewees. However, the respondents were obtained in this manner partly due to convenience as interviews normally require the respondents to spare some time and also partly due to the nature of the task itself which requires

the interviewees to feel comfortable in expressing themselves. To avoid bias in the course of the interviews, I was aware not to express my views on the topic.

Each potential respondent was first asked whether they had time to spare for a chat. Upon agreement, they were given only a vague idea of the topic of the interview (e.g. “It’s about Chinese language learning.”). This was to prevent any thought-out positions as the interviewer hoped to obtain spontaneous reactions. The interviews were conducted at premises that were quiet and that the respondents felt comfortable in, mostly in a room at their homes or a third party’s home (the third party being a close friend of the respondent).

It was mainly one-to-one, except for a respondent whose wife (also one of the respondents) joined in the interview at some points. The respondents were assured that this was an informal session and they could speak in any language that they were comfortable with (provided, of course, it was mutually intelligible). With two of the respondents whom I knew beforehand that they spoke in Mandarin most of the time, Mandarin was spoken to make them feel at ease. Before going further, I sought each respondent’s permission to record the interview on a mini-cassette tape so that it could save me from taking notes in the midst of the conversation. All of them readily agreed to the request.

There were no fixed questions in the interviews as the purpose of the interviews was to gather ideas and improve the conceptualization of the research topic. Instead, I had a list of general topics around which the interview was

conducted. I started talking about the bilingual approach to the teaching of Chinese Language. Depending on the respondents' familiarity with the topic itself, brief background information concerning the approach was given. They were then asked to freely express their views concerning this approach.

Many of them spontaneously spoke of what they felt about the approach. Few prompts were needed except for a few respondents who were initially more aware of the presence of the recorder and the reality of an interview. However, with time, all the respondents gradually grew more relaxed and spoke more naturally. Each interview sought to move naturally according to what the respondent was interested in talking about. For example, if a respondent mentioned a phrase about "it's not the problem of the language of medium of instruction", I would wait for a few moments to see whether the respondent would elaborate on his own initiative. If not, I would repeat the phrase or say a tentative "uhum" and see whether the respondent would develop this line of thought. If this still failed, I had the choice of using an incomplete sentence (e.g. "so you feel that medium of instruction is …") or a gentle query (e.g. "what makes you say that?") as probes. This non-directive style of interviewing was adopted to prevent myself from asking leading questions, thereby interfering in the interview.

It was only after the topic about the bilingual approach to the teaching of Chinese language had been explored in as much depth as possible that the topic of using Chinese to help teach English was raised in the interviews. This was because

I was interested in knowing whether respondents would have similar views as they had on the bilingual approach. Most of the interviews drew quite naturally and cordially to a close.

After each interview, I listened to each tape to take note of the themes in the interview. The tapes were frequently stopped and re-wound to go back over a part of the interview. Each interview was listened to at least twice, with the duration of the interview ranging from approximately 20 minutes to an hour.

The following were the main reasons mentioned by some respondents in support of the bilingual approach.

1) Students will be able to understand the meanings of words by using the stronger language (i.e. English) to help the weaker language (i.e. Chinese). However, a respondent from the 13-19 age group added that some Chinese proverbs could not be explained using English.

2) It will ease students' fears and help them to gain confidence. As a result, they may be more interested in learning Chinese.

3) Two respondents spoke of their personal experience when they were being taught Chinese. A respondent belonging to the 20-39 group shared that based on his personal experience as a student previously, it will be helpful if English is used to explain Mandarin words and concepts so that students will not lose interest in the process of learning and feel more at ease. Another respondent

who was in the age group of 13-19 also mentioned that her Chinese language teacher used English to explain the meanings of a few difficult Chinese words. She could better understand the meanings of these words and her interest in Chinese increased slightly.

4) A few respondents felt that English can be used to teach Chinese culture and values, the only difference is that a different language is being used. A respondent from the age group 20-39 mentioned that retaining Chinese culture does not really depend on one's knowledge of Chinese language. There are other factors such as family practice, personal interest and friends. For some students, Chinese can be such a pain that they do not even care about Chinese culture anymore. He felt that using English (or other languages that the students understand) to explain Chinese culture might actually help them to appreciate Chinese culture more and understand it better. Nevertheless, a respondent (from the youngest age group) who was agreeable to the approach mentioned that students taught using this approach would lose out on Chinese culture as the English translation for some Chinese cultural concepts would not be very accurate and would result in a difference in understanding of the Chinese culture.

Each of the main reasons was mentioned by at least two respondents. Besides these, one respondent also raised a point that through the bilingual

approach, students can improve both Chinese and English as the approach makes use of the translation of these languages. It is also noted that whilst some respondents indicated their support of the policy, they acknowledged its limits (e.g. inability to explain the meanings of some Chinese proverbs) and possible flaws (e.g. will lose out on Chinese culture).

I shall go on to look at some of the objections raised by other respondents.

1) There are factors which affect the acquisition of a language more than the medium of instruction. Respondents emphasized the importance of the family environment (parents' language use and attitudes, whether they encourage their children to learn Chinese by devising means to arouse their interest) and students' own determination and interest in learning the language. Besides the family and students themselves, other factors include the schools (whether there is a conducive learning environment, whether teachers explain passages vividly), the government (to what extent they value the language) and friends (whether they speak the language). A Chinese-educated respondent aged above 40 asserted that the bilingual approach does not tackle the roots of the problem as it only tries to solve the problem at a very superficial level.

2) Using English to help teach Chinese may neglect some aspects of the Chinese culture and result in a different understanding of Chinese culture. A respondent from the 20-39 age group pointed out that there is a lack of correspondence

between some English words and Chinese cultural concepts. Another respondent who was Chinese-educated (aged above 40) claimed that the approach is “impure” and that we should only use Chinese to teach Chinese language and English to teach English language. Besides, she also mentioned that a Chinese should know Chinese language and should not need to “mix” the Chinese language with English. One respondent (also Chinese-educated, aged above 40) went further to claim that Chinese teaches moral values whereas English does not. To him, Chinese is not just a language as it teaches a whole set of values as principles to live by. He argues that if we use English to help teach Chinese, we will not be able to learn these values.

Other reservations concerning the approach were that it would result in continued reliance on English and that the approach is unprecedented in Singapore. A respondent from the age group 20-39 also mentioned the point of examination constraints in that the students are not allowed to write in English to explain the meaning of a Chinese word. If the explanation is learnt through English, the students may not be able to express the answers in Chinese.

When asked about the next topic about using Chinese to help teach English, all the respondents gave the same reactions as they did for the bilingual approach. The reasons they provided were also similar in nature as well. With the input of these exploratory interviews, I made some refinements to my research focus. Some

of the changes include omitting the topic of “using Chinese to help teach English” as the interviewees did not demonstrate much difference in their reactions in comparison with the bilingual approach and to insert additional topics such as “language purity” and “factors affecting language acquisition” as the interviews revealed these topics as prominent concerns among respondents. The interviews also affirmed “usefulness of English to learn and improve Chinese”, “usefulness of English to improve attitudes towards Chinese learning” and “relationship between language and culture” as topics worthy of exploration in the research.

3.1.2 PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

With the refined topics of research in mind, a questionnaire was drawn up with some of the statements taken from the interviews themselves (e.g. “students will lose out on some of the Chinese culture.”, “[f]or some students, Chinese language can be such a pain that it drives them away from learning Chinese culture.”) and words such as “messy” and “impure” so that they would sound more authentic. There was also a Chinese translation of the questionnaire. The respondents could choose to complete the English questionnaires or the Chinese questionnaires. Responses obtained through the Chinese questionnaires were translated into English by me (my translation henceforth abbreviated as AT).

The survey was piloted with five respondents, with three respondents (ages 14, 20 and 51) using English questionnaire and two respondents (ages 61 for both) using the Chinese translation. The three respondents each represented groups 1 to 3

in my study while the two respondents represented group 4 in my study. They were people whom I knew on a personal basis. The respondents were told that they were taking part in a try-out study and that they could ask about things that they did not understand.

For each piloting, I was with the respondents so that I could take note of any difficulties they had in doing the survey. There were some difficulties mainly in the area of filling in things such as where they should write the answer and what certain terms mean. For example, a respondent wanted to know what the term "Media" in the questionnaire encompassed. Another respondent asked for clarification on the terms "Siblings" and "Spouse". As such, I made some changes to the pilot survey to make the survey more comprehensible and easy to fill in. These changes included inserting instructions and symbols such as ticks and circles where necessary as well as giving more examples to define the terms or changing the terms. Some respondents were also very helpful in offering suggestions on improving the survey's comprehensibility.

The corresponding changes were made, wherever appropriate, to the Chinese survey. The two Chinese-educated respondents did not encounter problems in understanding the content of the survey. They had problems mainly in the layout of the survey, which was thereafter rectified.

The time taken for the respondents to complete the questionnaires varied. Generally speaking, the younger ones took less time (about 20 minutes) whereas

the older respondents took about an hour due to problems with the layout of the survey and their relatively slower reading speed. Nevertheless, it was difficult to shorten the survey as the topics in the survey had to be included if the study was to be more comprehensive. To solve the problem, it was decided that for the actual questionnaire, more time could be given to the older respondents to complete the survey at their leisure and the survey could be returned at a later date. Alternatively, the respondents' children (who had done the survey themselves) or I could help the older respondents to complete the questionnaire by asking them the questions verbally, instead of them reading through the questions themselves.

3.1.3 QUESTIONNAIRE OBJECTIVES

The current study seeks to uncover language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism primarily through responses to the bilingual approach of teaching Chinese. It is not meant as a large-scale sociolinguistic survey of the ethnic Chinese population in Singapore as Xu et al. (1998) have done. This study hopes to consider some of the reactions to the bilingual approach and examine the linguistic and cultural issues behind these reactions.

The aims of the questionnaire are as follows:

1) to provide a description of the language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism among some of the ethnic Chinese in Singapore

2) to compare the language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism among some Singaporean Chinese of 3 broad age groups (ages 13-19; 20-39; 40 and above)

3) to compare the language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism among some Singaporean Chinese aged 40 and above who were educated in different types of schools (English medium schools and Chinese medium schools)

The language attitudes include the following:

1) The desire/non-desire to improve their proficiencies in English and Chinese and their corresponding reasons

2) The desire/non-desire for their children to improve their proficiencies in English and Chinese and their corresponding reasons

3) Perceptions of the characteristics of English and Chinese

4) How English may or may not help the acquisition of Chinese
   a) Usefulness of using English to learn and improve Chinese
   b) Usefulness of using English to improve attitudes towards Chinese learning

5) Relationship between language and culture
   a) Usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture
   b) Role that Chinese language plays in transmitting Chinese culture

6) Language purity (Isolation of one language from the other languages to prevent 'contamination')

7) Factors affecting language acquisition (in this case, acquisition of Chinese language)
   a) Importance of medium of instruction in language acquisition
   b) Importance of other factors (e.g. family, government etc.) in language acquisition

8) Their approval or disapproval of the bilingual approach to teaching Chinese and their corresponding reasons
   - factors to consider: which group of learners, what kind of help, who can use English in the classroom, when to stop using the approach

3.1.4 QUESTIONNAIRE CHARACTERISTICS

3.1.4.1 DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Attitude statements are written to investigate the language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism. Most of the language attitudes are studied by forming these statements into likert-scales. The exceptions are language attitude 3 "Perceptions of the characteristics of English and Chinese" and language attitude 8 "Their approval or disapproval of the bilingual approach to teaching Chinese and their corresponding reasons". These two language attitudes are examined using nominal data. Respondents are asked to indicate "English", "Chinese" or "Both" (for language attitude 3) and "Agree", "Disagree" or "Neither agree nor disagree" (for language attitude 8). Background information about the respondents are obtained through categorical data, rankings and tables. These information are used to group the respondents and to give an idea of their language usage and proficiencies.

Each likert-scale is designed to measure one language attitude. To improve the reliability of the likert-scale, a set of items is constructed in each scale. This cancels out any bias due to any vagaries of question wording in a single item. Besides since an attitude is more complex than, for example, how one travels to school, it is unlikely that a single question will reflect it adequately. Roughly equal proportions of positive and negative items are randomly placed to keep the scale balanced. As Oppenheim (1992: 200) points out, attitude scales are "techniques for

placing people on a continuum in relation to each other, in relative and not in absolute terms." It has to be emphasized that the likert-scales are not meant to provide absolute scores concerning a person's attitudes but rather to be used to provide a rough division of people into broad groups with respect to a particular attitude.

The results of the likert-scales are mainly analyzed using Analysis of Variance (commonly abbreviated as ANOVA), a statistical method used to compare the means of three or more groups. ANOVA guards against multiple Type I errors (i.e. incorrectly finding one of the comparisons significant when in fact no difference exists). ANOVA determines whether there is an overall difference among groups. To find out which groups differ, post-hoc comparisons such as LSD (least significant difference, employed in this study) and Dunnett are used to test the difference between each pair of means. Another statistical method used in this study is the Pearson's correlation analysis. This analysis finds out if there is a relationship between two variables but does not show causation between the variables.

However, the complexities of issues such as "Relationship between language and culture" and "Language purity" (as discussed in section 2.4) also call for a more in-depth investigation than simply attitude measurement through direct techniques. It is with this reason in mind that sentence completion (including single word) items have been included in the questionnaire. Examples of such items in the

questionnaire include “Reason(s):” (for desire/non-desire to improve own proficiencies in the languages) and “I agree because…”, “I disagree because…”, “I neither agree nor disagree because…” (reasons for their reactions to the bilingual approach). It is hoped that these completion items can reveal associations and perceptions on a deeper level than that which would be obtainable through the attitude scales.

The answers to these completion items are analyzed in two ways: by coding the responses and by using WordSmith software to process the data. The coding of the responses is to provide an idea of the more prominent answers given by the respondents. Though requiring much effort, it is a useful way to summarize the data. Admittedly, this places the burden heavily on my interpretation of the responses. This is why the WordSmith software is also used in the analysis to provide some empirical basis to the discussion.

WordSmith Tools is an integrated suite of programs written by Mike Scott for looking at how words behave in texts. The Wordlist tool and the Concord tool are used in my analysis. With the Wordlist tool, I am able to see a list of all the words or word-clusters in a text, set out in frequency order, thus enabling me to look at some of the key lexical terms in the respondents’ answers. The Concord tool also gives me a chance to see any word or phrase in context, thus allowing me to see how a word or phrase is used. Besides concordancing, the tool also has a feature which shows the words which occur in the neighbourhood of a particular

search word. These words are known as “collocates”. For example, collocates of “letter” might include “post”, “stamp”, “envelope” etc. The default collocate horizon (which I adopted in my analysis) is 5 words to the left and 5 words to the right. The examination of collocations allows me to see lexical and grammatical patterns of co-occurrence, thus enabling me to observe associations between certain words and ideas. For instance, I could find out what the term “Chinese” is usually associated with.

It is hoped that with a range of the above-mentioned quantitative and qualitative data treatment of the questionnaire, the study will be able to glean rich insights of language attitudes through reactions to the bilingual approach of teaching Chinese.

3.1.4.2 CONTENTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey consists of a total of 24 questions. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix I. Questions 1 to 11 are designed to gather background information about the respondents, such as socio- demographic data (e.g. nationality, ethnicity, age, gender, occupation, highest educational level, stream of education), language acquisition histories, language use patterns and language proficiencies. The information is collected in the form of categorical data, rankings and tables.

Questions 12 to 23 are designed to measure and obtain insights about language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism. Question 12 deals with

language attitudes 1 and 2 “The desire/non-desire for themselves and their children to improve their proficiencies in English and Chinese” while Question 13 deals with language attitude 3 “Perceptions of the characteristics of English and Chinese”. Question 12 requires the respondents to indicate their answers on a 5-point likert-scale (Strongly agree- Agree- Neutral- Disagree- Strongly disagree) whereas Question 13 is in grid form, requiring the respondents to tick their responses.

Questions 14 to 23 attempt to examine the rest of the language attitudes through reactions to the Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language. The breakdown is as follows:

4) How English may or may not help the acquisition of Chinese
   a) Usefulness of using English to learn and improve Chinese (Question 14)
   b) Usefulness of using English to improve attitudes towards Chinese learning (Question 15)

5) Relationship between language and culture
   a) Usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture (Question 16)
   b) Role that Chinese language plays in transmitting Chinese culture (Question 17)

6) Language purity (Isolation of one language from the other languages to prevent ‘contamination’) (Question 18)

7) Factors affecting language acquisition (in this case, acquisition of Chinese language)
   a) Importance of medium of instruction in language acquisition (Question 19)
   b) Importance of other factors (e.g. family, government etc.) in language acquisition (Question 20)

8) Their approval or disapproval of the bilingual approach to teaching Chinese and their corresponding reasons (Questions 21 and 23)
   - factors to consider: which group of learners, what kind of help, who can use English in the classroom, when to stop using the approach (Question 22)

Questions 14 to 20 are in the form of likert-scales. Each likert-scale contains at least 4 items. For Questions 21 and 22, they are in the form of multiple-choice questions. Question 23 is a sentence completion item which allows respondents to write down reasons behind their reactions towards the approach. Finally, Question 24 invites any other comments from the respondents.

3.1.4.3 SAMPLING AND ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The study required the respondents to be ethnic Singaporean Chinese aged above 12. The minimal age was determined at 12 because through informal pilot testing with children less than 12 years old, it was found that they did not understand the issues raised in the questionnaire. A sample of each of the following groups was obtained:

1) ages 13-19

2) ages 20-39

3) ages 40 and above who were English-educated

4) ages 40 and above who were Chinese-educated

The respondents were obtained by snowball sampling. Some individuals (whom I knew on a personal basis and satisfied the criteria of participation) were asked to complete the questionnaire. These individuals were then requested to identify others who satisfied the inclusion criteria. This method of sampling was used because it was impractical to obtain a list of all Singaporean Chinese. It must be mentioned that I am aware that recommendations might produce a biased sample.

However, with the constraints of getting a list of names for sampling, this was the alternative.

218 questionnaires were given out (in person, by postal mail and by email) to those who satisfied the criteria of participating in the study. Of these, 137 questionnaires were returned. 130 of these questionnaires were of usable quality and constituted the sample size for this study. The rejection of the seven questionnaires was due to item nonresponse. These respondents did not complete several items in the survey mainly because of lack of patience in doing the survey.

The composition of the sample is described below.

Target Group	**Age range**	**Number of males**	**Number of females**	**Total**	**Cumulative total**
13-19	13-19	16	16	32	32
20-39	20-39	18	20	38	70
40 and above English-educated	41-62	15	15	30	100
40 and above Chinese-educated	40-66	13	17	30	130

Table 2 Composition of sample

As can be observed from the table, the gender ratio in each group was kept as balanced as possible. Each group consisted of at least 30 respondents so that a reasonable comparison could be made between the groups.

The item nonresponse rate was relatively low. An average of one respondent did not answer Questions 11, 12 and 22 while an average of two respondents did not answer Question 13. The reason for the item nonresponse was probably due to carelessness as the respondents answered all other questions. Four

respondents (one each from groups 2 and 3, two from group 4) did not answer Question 23. This was probably due to a reluctance of people to elaborate on their opinions as these respondents completed all other questions that required only the filling in of information and selection of responses.

The survey was administered by fellow respondents who had completed the questionnaire and me. Whenever possible, I was present while the respondent completed the questionnaire. In cases where the respondents preferred to answer at their leisure, the respondents were reminded that they could always email or call me for any clarification. As for fellow respondents who helped with the administration of the questionnaire, instructions were given to them beforehand concerning how to conduct the survey, in particular the need to refrain from expressing their own views so that they would not influence the respondent's answers. In cases of doubt, these helpers could also contact me. On average, respondents took about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered over a period of two months, from end January to end March 2004.

3.2 PRESS CUTTINGS AND POLICY STATEMENTS

Besides questionnaires which are used as the primary data in my study, press cuttings and policy statements that are relevant to my study are also used in the discussion wherever appropriate. The press cuttings are mostly obtained from the main English and Chinese newspapers in Singapore, namely The Straits Times and

Lianhe Zaobao while the policy statements are obtained from the Singapore Ministry of Education website http://www.moe.gov.sg/. These press cuttings and policy statements (dated from March 2003 to February 2004) report on the development of the bilingual approach to the teaching of Chinese language and reactions from the public which raise issues similar to the ones investigated in this study. They are available for reference in Appendix II.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey gathered background information about the respondents such as age, occupation, highest educational level and language proficiency. The results will be presented in this section.

4.1.1 AGE DISTRIBUTION

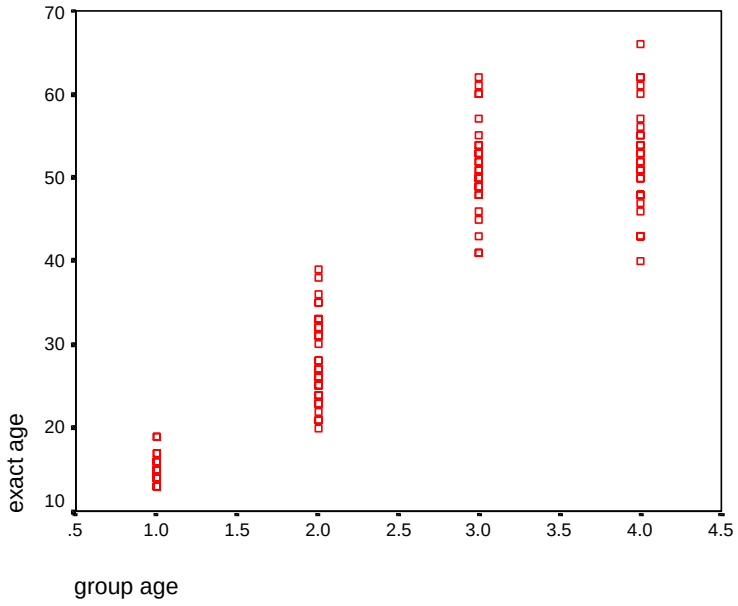


Figure 2. Distribution of ages in each group

Figure 2 is a scatterplot which shows the dispersion of ages in each group. The age ranges of the respondents varied between 13-19 for group 1, 20-39 for group 2, 41-62 for group 3 and 40-66 for group 4. As we can see from the graph, the

distribution of ages in each group is quite even. The respondents of each age group are not clustered just around a certain age, thus ensuring that the grouping is representative of the range of each age group in this survey.

4.1.2 OCCUPATION

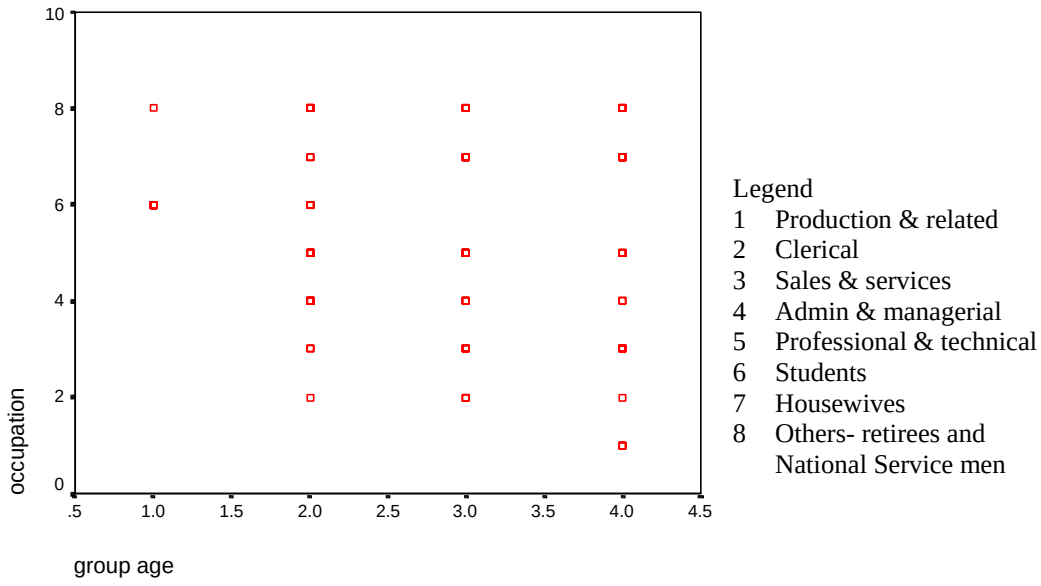


Figure 3. Occupation of respondents in each group

Figure 3 shows the occupation of respondents in each group. For group 1, the respondents were either students or National Service men. This is understandable as most Singaporean teenagers attend secondary schools and post-secondary institutions such as junior colleges and polytechnics. For group 2, the respondents held a range of occupations, except production and related. For groups 3 and 4, the respondents held a similar range of occupations. The only difference was that group 4 had people working in production and related areas whereas group 3 did not.

4.1.3 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

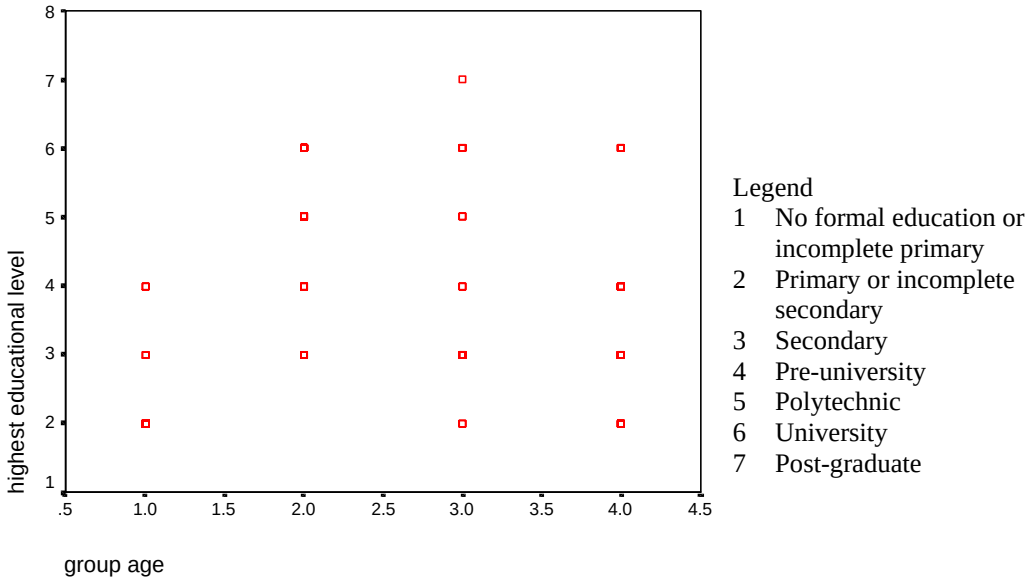


Figure 4. Highest educational level of respondents in each group

Figure 4 shows the highest educational level of respondents in each group. For group 1, the respondents had primary, secondary or pre-university as highest qualification. This is again understandable when we consider their age. For group 2, the respondents ranged from those who had up to secondary education to those who had university education. For group 3, the respondents ranged from those who had up to primary education to those who had up to postgraduate education. For group 4, the respondents ranged from those who had up to primary education to those who had up to university education. Group 3 also had respondents who had polytechnic qualifications whereas group 4 did not. The percentages of respondents who had pre-university qualifications and below were 80% and 87% respectively in groups 3 and 4, showing that the two groups did not vary very much in their educational level. However, it is interesting that group 4 had people working in

production and related areas whereas group 3 did not, suggesting that English-medium education provided some advantage to employment in certain kinds of jobs, in particular the non-production related ones.

4.1.4 SELF-RATED PROFICIENCIES IN THE LANGUAGES

The overall self-rated proficiency of each respondent was computed by adding the respondent's self-rated skills in the four main areas of a language, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. A one-way ANOVA was performed on the overall self-rated proficiencies of the respondents in Chinese and English. For all statistical tests performed in this study, the significance level was taken at .05. Where applicable, other levels (.01 or .001) were used to indicate greater degrees of significance.

Chinese Language

The ANOVA indicated a significant difference in self-rated Chinese proficiency across groups, F (3,129) = 29.837, $p < .001$. Group 1's ratings of their overall proficiencies in Chinese did not differ significantly from group 2's ratings. This is not surprising since both groups underwent the same system of bilingual education in school. Group 1's ratings in Chinese were significantly higher than group 3's, mean difference = 5.171, $p < .001$. This could be due to the fact that the respondents in group 3 received their education in English-medium schools and hence gained less exposure to the Chinese language both in school and in the

family domains. However, group 1's ratings in Chinese were significantly lower than group 4's, mean difference = -2.796, $p < .01$. This could possibly be due to the fact that respondents in group 4 received their education in Chinese-medium schools whereas group 1's respondents received bilingual education in which Chinese Language is just a content subject on its own. Among the groups, as expected, groups 3 and 4 differed most in their self-ratings of overall proficiencies in Chinese, mean difference = 7.967, $p < .001$. Group 3 rated themselves as significantly more proficient in Chinese than group 4. This is not surprising as the two groups were educated in schools that had different medium of instruction. The differences in self-ratings across groups indicate that the language of teaching in a school does affect self-ratings of proficiencies in the language.

A report on each group's mean self-ratings (based on likert scales) in each of the various aspects of language proficiency is provided in Table 3.

Group		**Listen well in Chinese**	**Speak well in Chinese**	**Read well in Chinese**	**Write well in Chinese**
1	M	4.375	4.063	3.531	3.469
	SD	0.660	0.914	1.191	1.218
2	M	4.158	3.632	3.237	2.842
	SD	0.789	1.025	1.173	1.263
3	M	3.333	3.000	2.167	1.767
	SD	0.884	0.983	1.020	0.935
4	M	4.833	4.500	4.600	4.300
	SD	0.379	0.731	0.724	0.915

Legend
M Mean
SD Standard Deviation

Table 3 Mean self-ratings and standard deviations of the various aspects in Chinese: analysis by groups

The greatest difference in the self-ratings across groups is found in the aspect of writing in Chinese. Group 3 differed significantly in self-ratings from group 4 in

this aspect, mean difference = -2.533, $p < .001$. This is understandable as they were taught content subjects in different medium. The next difference, second in magnitude, is found in the aspect of reading in Chinese. Once again, it was groups 3 and 4 which contributed to the difference. Group 3 rated themselves as significantly less proficient in reading in Chinese than group 4, mean difference = -2.433, $p < .001$. It suggests that for the Chinese language, writing and reading skills are more difficult to pick up than listening and speaking skills if the school environment is less conducive to learning Chinese language (e.g. Chinese is not the medium of instruction for content subjects). It is also interesting that respondents in group 1 rated themselves as significantly less proficient than group 4 in all the skills except speaking in Chinese, suggesting that the young generation of Singaporean Chinese today differs from the older generation of Chinese-educated Singaporean Chinese in all aspects except in speaking Chinese. When paired sample T-tests were performed on group 1's self-ratings in the various skills, the results of the tests revealed significant differences between speaking in Chinese and the other skills of listening, reading and writing respectively. On the other hand, there is no significant difference between their self-ratings on reading and writing in Chinese. The paired samples correlation also showed that the correlation between reading and writing well in Chinese was the strongest for group 1, having a strength of 0.868, $p < .001$. This is true even when the self-ratings of other groups are observed. For groups 2, 3 and 4, the correlation between reading and

writing in Chinese was also the strongest, having strengths of 0.883, 0.837 and 0.812 respectively, $p < .001$. These suggest that writing and reading in Chinese are closely related skills, which should help to inform us regarding our teaching approaches should we wish to improve our Chinese in either aspect.

English Language

The ANOVA performed on the overall proficiencies of the respondents in English revealed a significant difference across groups, $F(3, 129) = 31.376$, $p < .001$. It is note-worthy that groups 1, 2 and 3 did not differ significantly from one another in their overall proficiencies in English whereas group 4 differed significantly from the three other groups in terms of overall proficiencies in English, $p < .001$. The significant difference in English proficiencies between groups 3 and 4 is understandable as they were educated in schools which had different medium of instruction. The fact that there were no significant differences among groups 1, 2 and 3 suggests that the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese did not differ from the older generation of English-educated Singaporean Chinese in terms of their proficiencies in English. This might be due to the bilingual school system in which the younger generation are taught content subjects in the English medium, which was similar to the practice in English-medium schools of the past.

A report on each group's mean self-ratings (based on likert scales) in each of the various aspects of language proficiency is provided in Table 4.

Group		Listen well in English	Speak well in English	Read well in English	Write well in English
1	M	4.281	4.031	3.938	3.781
	SD	0.683	0.695	0.840	0.706
2	M	4.421	4.184	4.290	3.921
	SD	0.642	0.730	0.654	0.969
3	M	4.533	4.300	4.333	4.033
	SD	0.629	0.651	0.661	0.928
4	M	3.100	2.500	2.567	2.367
	SD	1.155	1.137	1.104	1.066

Legend
M Mean
SD Standard Deviation

Table 4 Mean self-ratings and standard deviations of the various aspects in English: analysis by groups

The greatest difference between self-ratings across groups is found in the aspect of speaking in English. Group 3 differed significantly from group 4 in this aspect, mean difference = 1.800, $p < .001$. This is understandable since the groups were in schools which had different medium of instruction. The next difference, second in magnitude, is found in the aspect of reading in English. Again, groups 3 and 4 were involved. Respondents in group 3 rated themselves as significantly more proficient in reading in English than group 4, mean difference = 1.767, $p < .001$. This suggests that for English language, speaking and reading are the skills which are relatively more difficult to pick up if the school environment is not conducive to learning English (e.g. English is not the medium of instruction for content subjects).

It is interesting that groups 1, 2 and 3 did not differ significantly from one another in all four aspects of the language whereas group 4 differed significantly from each of the other groups in all aspects ($p < .001$). This further supports the view that the system of education plays a part in the language proficiencies. Like the respondents from group 3, those from groups 1 and 2 are or have been taught

content subjects in English. This accounts for the relatively high proficiency of English for these three groups, compared to group 4.

Paired samples T-tests were performed for each group's self-ratings in the various skills. For all the groups, the greatest difference was in the self-ratings of listening and writing skills in English, $p < .001$. Listening and writing were also the least-correlated skills for each of the groups. Although these two aspects were the least-correlated, the correlations still reached significance for each of the groups, $p < .001$. For all the groups, the least difference was in the self-ratings of speaking and reading skills in English, $p > .05$. There is no single pair of most-correlated skills for the groups.

Relative language proficiencies for each group

Paired samples T-tests were performed for each group separately to find out each group's relative proficiencies in Chinese and English. For group 1, although the respondents gave higher ratings for their proficiencies in English than Chinese (mean difference = 0.594), there was no significant difference in self-ratings of the two languages. This means that respondents in group 1 perceive themselves to be effectively bilingual. It is still moot whether they are in reality effectively bilingual.

For group 2, the respondents rated themselves as significantly more proficient in English than Chinese (mean difference = 2.947), $p < .001$. This suggests that the young generation in my study see themselves as more proficient in English than in Chinese. The difference was significantly present for group 2.

For groups 3 and 4, there were significant differences in their self-ratings of language proficiencies, although they were in different directions. Respondents in group 3 rated themselves as significantly more proficient in English than in Chinese (mean difference = 6.933), $p < .001$. Respondents in group 4 rated themselves as significantly more proficient in Chinese than in English (mean difference = 7.700), $p < .001$. These results are expected because groups 3 and 4 received different medium of education. What is more interesting to note is that the mean differences in self-ratings of language proficiencies are comparatively smaller for groups 1 and 2 than groups 3 and 4. This suggests that with a bilingual education system, people perceive themselves to be increasingly effectively bilingual.

4.2 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINESE-ENGLISH BILINGUALISM

In the following sections, the findings of the survey regarding language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism through reactions to the Bilingual Approach will be presented and discussed.

4.2.1 DESIRE TO IMPROVE PROFICIENCIES IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

A one-way ANOVA was performed on the respondents' indications on the likert-scale of their desires to improve their proficiencies in Chinese and English. The respondents were also asked to provide reasons for their answers.

Chinese Language

There were no significant differences across groups in terms of their desire to improve their Chinese. Group 1 had the strongest desire to improve their Chinese, followed by groups 2, 3 and 4 in descending order. The two main reasons given by those in group 1 who wanted to improve their Chinese were related to examination scores (e.g. “[t]o do better in my tests and exams.”, “[m]y grades for written papers pull my overall down.” and “I feel that my grades are not good enough.”) and their ethnic identity as Chinese (e.g. “I’m a Chinese and should be fluent in my native tongue.”, “I am a Chinese” and “Because I am Chinese?”). It is not surprising that group 1 respondents (who are students) wanted to improve their Chinese because they wanted to do better in examinations. The more intriguing thing is that they felt that a mastery of Chinese language is linked to their identity as a Chinese. This rings a similar tone to the “one race = one language = one culture” equation (mentioned in section 1.5) which the Singapore government has propagated through the Speak Mandarin Campaigns held over the years. It is evident that many of our teens have subscribed to this notion.

Group 2 respondents who wanted to improve their Chinese cited three main reasons: for better communication with others (e.g. “to communicate effectively”), for economic benefit (e.g. “[e]conomic reason (rise of China).”) and for knowing one’s ethnic language and culture (e.g. “[i]t is my mother tongue” and “[t]o know my roots well”). Group 3 respondents were mainly motivated by the desire to

communicate effectively with the Chinese-speaking community in Singapore (e.g. "[t]o communicate better with the Chinese speaking"). Those in group 4 had self-improvement reasons such as "to read and write more fluently in Chinese" (my translation, AT) as well as to "aim for perfection". With the rise of China, many are motivated to improve their Chinese due to economic gains. Besides this pragmatic drive, it is unexpected that some of our younger generation are stirred by ethnic and cultural considerations. While schools endorse governmental policies which project mother tongues as languages of culture, it does not automatically mean that school children will readily absorb the messages of these policies. However, this study has showed that many of our young generation are influenced by the governmental policies in the way they view the relationship between language and culture.

English Language

As for improving their English, there were significant differences across groups. Group 1 wanted to improve their English significantly more than group 3. Group 2 also wanted to improve their English significantly more than group 3. Group 1 had the strongest desire to improve their English, followed by groups 2, 4 and 3 in descending order. Group 1 was motivated to improve their English because of academic reasons (e.g. "Studies need constant improving." and "I need GP to pass my A levels."- GP stands for General Paper which requires students to write essays and answer comprehension passages in English) and because of the importance of

English in international communication (e.g. “English is a language that is used world-wide” and “[u]seful for communication with the world.”).

Group 2 respondents wanted to improve their English primarily because of communication needs at the workplace. Instances of such responses include “[t]o equip me better communication skills in work.” and “I need to brush up on business writing for work purposes.” Many group 4 respondents also wanted to improve their English because they needed it for work (e.g. “talk better with clients”). Some also felt that their English was poor (e.g. “My English is bad”) and they wanted to communicate with other people (e.g. “to be able to communicate with more people and express myself” (AT)). Several group 3 respondents also stated communication purposes as their reason for wanting to improve their English.

What can be gathered from these responses is that for the most part, respondents wanted to improve their English because of communication needs, be it for business reasons or social reasons. This is due to the status of English language in the present Singapore society as well as globally. English has become one of the languages for social interaction in Singapore and is no longer simply playing the role of a language for business. Nevertheless, compared to Chinese, the motivations for learning English are more utilitarian in orientation. One of the common reasons cited by respondents for learning Chinese is linked to ethnic identity. This motivation is absent in the learning of English.

Other observations

For both languages, group 1 showed the greatest desire to improve them. This may be because in pressure-driven Singapore, their main preoccupation now is presumably to do well in their studies and this constitutes a very strong driving force for them to improve their languages. It also seems that proficient respondents tend to have less desire to improve the language, since groups 3 and 4 showed the least desire to improve their English and their Chinese respectively. For instance a group 3 respondent wrote "I'm already well-versed in the language." as the reason as to why he did not want to improve his English while a group 4 respondent wrote "I feel that my Chinese is OK!"

Another thing worthy to note is that there was no significant difference in the desires to improve their Chinese and English for groups 1, 3 and 4 respectively whereas group 2 wanted to improve their English significantly more than Chinese. Let us take a look at the reasons given by group 2 respondents. Some do not see a need to improve their Chinese as they view their knowledge of Chinese as sufficient for their communication needs at present. Others are simply not interested. On the other hand, many felt that improving their English would aid them in communication for business reasons.

4.2.2 DESIRE FOR CHILD TO IMPROVE PROFICIENCIES IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

About 46% of the 130 respondents answered the questions on whether they would like their children to improve their proficiencies in Chinese and English as they were applicable to them. A one-way ANOVA was performed on the respondents' indications on the likert-scale of their desires to improve their children's proficiencies in Chinese and English. The respondents were also asked to provide reasons for their answers.

Chinese Language

There were no significant differences across groups in terms of their desires to improve their children's proficiencies in Chinese. Group 2 had the strongest desire to improve their child's Chinese, followed by groups 4 and 3 in descending order. The main reasons as to why group 2 respondents wanted to improve their children's Chinese were that they are Chinese (e.g. "Because she is a Chinese too!") and that they want their children to be able to communicate with others (e.g. "For effective communication with people and society."). Most group 4 respondents would like their children to improve their Chinese because they are Chinese and Chinese Language is their mother tongue (e.g. "Chinese must be able to understand Chinese Language" (AT) and "mother tongue. understand cultural tradition" (AT, translated verbatim). Group 3 respondents raised more pragmatic reasons such as "[s]o that

they have more options in their careers" and "Singapore is bilingual and multiracial."

English Language

There were also no significant differences across groups in terms of their desires to improve their children's proficiencies in English. The results were similar to the ones on the question on improving children's proficiencies in Chinese. Group 2 had the strongest desire to improve their child's English, followed by groups 4 and 3 in descending order. Reasons cited by group 2 respondents include the international status of English language (e.g. "universal language, most widely used.") and for communication purposes (e.g. "to be able to communicate and write without much difficulty."). Group 4 respondents stated the following as reasons: the international status of English language and the key role that English plays in Singapore, both commercially and socially (e.g. "to suit Singapore's environment so as to meet the demands at work and in daily life." (AT)). Many group 3 respondents used the key role of English argument as a reason although they did not specify it in the Singapore context (e.g. "English is a very important language for written as well as communication and career").

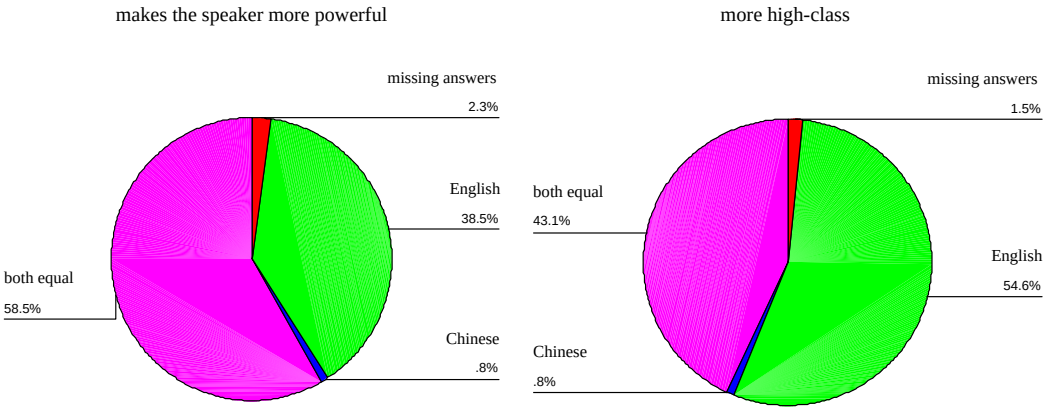
Other observations

Similar to the observation that I mentioned in section 4.2.1 concerning motivations for improving one's language proficiencies, the causes that propel people towards

wanting their children's language proficiencies to improve are different in nature according to different languages. The reasons for Chinese are more culturally based (with a tinge of pragmatic reason as well) whereas the ones for English are more down-to-earth. It is worth pointing out that several of the respondents recognized the bilingual nature of Singapore's present society (whether for working and/or social purposes) and hence wanted their children to improve both English and Chinese. This probably accounts for why there were no significant differences in the desires for their children to improve their Chinese and English for each of the groups.

4.2.3 PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CHINESE LANGUAGE

The graphs below illustrate the 130 participants' responses regarding characteristics of the two languages.



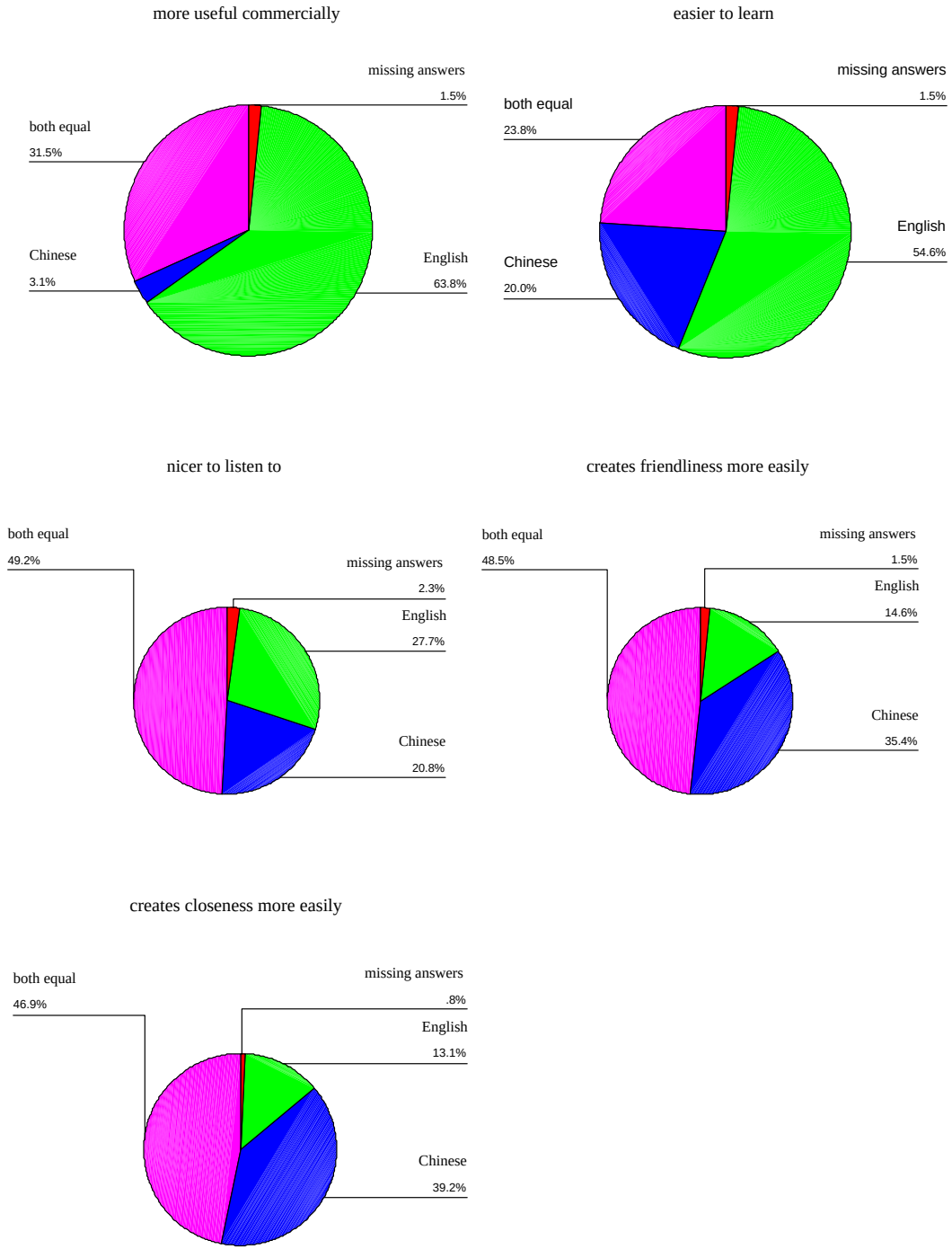


Figure 5. Pie charts showing respondents' perceptions of English and Chinese

As we can see from these charts, more than 50% of the responses indicated that English is perceived to be more high-class, more useful commercially and easier to learn compared to Chinese. This suggests that in Singapore, English is a language still very much associated with high prestige and commercial value. Perhaps due to its international status, English is emphasized in the public education system and so, is deemed to be easier to learn than Chinese by more than half of the respondents.

The percentages of responses which favoured English were higher than those which favoured Chinese for all the questions, except the ones regarding friendliness and closeness. This indicates that while English is closely associated with its commercial and prestige functions, Chinese is still closely associated for its affective functions in the community by a fraction of the respondents. However, the fact that almost half of the respondents indicated that both languages are equal in terms of being nicer to listen to, creating friendliness and closeness more easily suggests that English is also viewed by a significant fraction of people as being able to carry affective functions as effectively as Chinese. This is in contrast to the findings of Xu et al.'s (1998) survey. The majority of respondents in their survey chose "Mandarin" as a cordial language instead of "English" or "Both". Xu et al. also concluded from the results of their survey that English and Chinese were polarized in the dimensions of instrumentality and affectivity respectively. It is interesting that in the present study, while a fraction of respondents may feel that

Chinese is a more affective language compared to English, the majority of respondents feel that both are equal. This may signify a trend that English is acquiring a new function of affectivity in the Singapore Chinese community. Singaporean Chinese may feel that both Chinese and English can be used to express affectivity to a comparable extent.

On the other hand, more than half of the respondents also viewed Chinese as being able to make the speaker who speaks it as powerful as someone who speaks English. Although English is still closely associated with prestige and commercial value, the authoritative function is shared with Chinese (at least according to more than half of the respondents). One possible explanation is that while English is still viewed as a language crucial to international trade and associated with speakers who have high status in societies, the use of Chinese by many of the government officials in Singapore sends the message across to some Singaporeans that a person holding power (in this instance, political power) can use Chinese too. However, despite this change in authoritative function, more is needed to change the people's perceptions of English as a prestige language, should this be desired.

4.2.4 USEFULNESS OF USING ENGLISH TO LEARN AND IMPROVE CHINESE

Six likert-scale items in Question 14 were used to gauge the extent to which respondents felt that English is useful to help learn and improve Chinese. The items

include specific ones such as learning the meanings of Chinese words and general ones such as whether students will do better in their Chinese than before. Each respondent's answers to the six items were summed up and divided by the number of items that they answered (e.g. a respondent's total score would be divided by 5 if he only answered 5 items) to obtain an average score. The average score is rounded up to 3 decimal places. The procedure for the calculation of the average score is the same for all the other questions in the survey involving likert-scale items. The four groups' results are presented in Table 5.

Group	**Mean**	**Standard deviation**
Group 1	2.894	0.617
Group 2	2.952	0.633
Group 3	3.334	0.448
Group 4	2.639	0.630

Table 5 Usefulness of using English to learn and improve Chinese

As the above table shows, group 4 is the group which least feels that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese whereas group 3 is the group which most feels that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese. This is an interesting observation because it shows that the difference in attitudes towards the Bilingual Approach (in particular in terms of how English may or may not improve Chinese) is not due to age difference since Groups 3 and 4 are similar in age. Instead, the discriminating factor for the older generation in this instance is the background of the respondents, in particular the medium of instruction in which they were educated.

A possible reason as to why group 4 least feels that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese might be due to the way they have successfully acquired Chinese themselves without the use of English. However, they may have disregarded the fact that the environment in which they received their education was itself conducive to the learning of Chinese and that this conducive environment is no longer available to students presently.

Group 3 most feels that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese. This may be due to the fact that being more proficient in the English language than in Chinese language themselves, they may personally find that English as their stronger language is helpful in learning and improving Chinese, their weaker language. In fact, the general trend is that the more the respondents judged themselves as more proficient in English than in Chinese, the more they felt that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese. For example, group 1 rated their proficiencies in English to be about the same as their proficiencies in Chinese whereas group 2 rated their proficiencies in English as significantly higher than that for their Chinese. As a result, group 2 felt more strongly than group 1 that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese, even though this difference did not reach statistical significance.

A one-way ANOVA performed on the four groups' results revealed a significant difference in the way the groups felt that English is useful in helping to learn and improve Chinese, $\underline{F}$ (3, 129) = 7.106, $p < .001$. Some interesting

observations are highlighted here. Firstly, group 3 differed significantly from each of the other groups respectively. This indicates that it is the English-educated older generation of Singaporean Chinese who feel that the Bilingual Approach would be useful in learning and improving Chinese (mean = 3.334) whereas the other groups are significantly not as optimistic about the effects of this teaching approach (means for groups 1, 2 and 4 are all below 3 on the likert scale). There are various possible reasons for the difference. I have already discussed why group 4's responses were vastly different from group 3's. As for groups 1 and 2, the respondents in these groups probably viewed the approach differently from those in group 3 because they were more bilingual compared to group 3, having been educated in the bilingual education system. So, they perhaps experienced less difficulty in learning Chinese compared to those in group 3. It could also be that groups 1, 2 and 4 had stronger notions about language purity than group 3. Thus, this could account for why they were less optimistic about the approach than group 3. This is a possibility that I will look into using the results of the survey when I come to section 4.2.9.

Secondly, group 2 differed significantly from groups 3 and 4 in the extent to which they felt that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese. This suggests that group 2 did not agree as strongly as group 3 that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese and neither did it disagree as strongly as group 4 that English is useful for that purpose. On the other hand, group 2 did not differ

significantly from group 1 in the extent to which they felt that English is useful in learning and improving Chinese. This is something that we may observe in other questions of the survey to examine in what ways groups 1 and 2 are similar but different at the same time. The same thing applies to groups 1 and 4 who did not differ significantly in their responses for this question. At this moment, it is premature to make any further deductions till we have observed corresponding trends in other questions of the survey.

4.2.5 USEFULNESS OF USING ENGLISH TO IMPROVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINESE LEARNING

Six likert-scale items in Question 15 were used to gauge the extent to which respondents felt that English is useful in improving attitudes towards Chinese learning. The attitudes under investigation include those associated with interest, level of ease, fear and confidence in learning the language. The four groups' results are presented in Table 6.

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Group 1	3.182	0.946
Group 2	3.268	0.849
Group 3	3.800	0.638
Group 4	3.078	0.803

Table 6 Usefulness of using English to improve attitudes towards Chinese learning

Since Questions 14 and 15 deal with ways in which English may or may not help the acquisition of Chinese, the results of these two questions will be compared and discussed. The results of Question 15 are in a way similar to that in Question

14. Once again, it was group 4 who least felt the usefulness of using English to improve attitudes towards Chinese learning while group 3 most felt the usefulness of using English for this purpose. As discussed earlier for Question 14 in section 4.2.4, the difference in responses from groups 3 and 4 is most likely due to their disparate schooling background. Being educated in Chinese schools, respondents from group 4 probably did not have poor attitudes towards Chinese learning, least to say that English would not function as a motivational tool for them. As for group 3, they might have personally experienced the usefulness of using English for this function.

A one-way ANOVA was performed on the results of the four groups, revealing that there is a significant difference in the performance of the four groups, F (3, 129) = 4.638. Similar to the findings for Question 14, there is a significant difference between group 3 and each of the other groups. The possible reasons for this difference have been discussed in section 4.2.4 so I shall not repeat them here.

On the other hand, there are no significant differences found between these pairs, groups 1 and 2 and groups 1 and 4 respectively. These findings are in line with those for Question 14, giving evidence to suggest that these pairs of groups may be rather similar in some ways. For Question 14, groups 2 and 4 are found to be significantly different whereas for this question, the groups did not differ significantly in their responses. Due to the inconsistency, I have left out this pair of respondent groups (2 and 4) in my comparison for similarities.

So far, I have mentioned that the responses in Question 14 were similar to those in Question 15 in some ways. However, one difference between the responses for these questions is that generally speaking, the respondents were more optimistic that the Bilingual Approach would help improve attitudes towards Chinese language learning than they felt it would help students to learn and improve Chinese, as shown by the mean scores of all the groups which were above 3 on the likert-scale, compared to the relatively lower mean scores for Question 14.

4.2.6 USEFULNESS OF ENGLISH IN TRANSMITTING CHINESE CULTURE

Six likert-scale items were used to investigate to what extent the respondents felt that English is useful in transmitting Chinese culture. The questions are associated with the understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and its concepts. Their results are tabulated as below.

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Group 1	2.725	0.492
Group 2	2.943	0.722
Group 3	3.422	0.536
Group 4	2.606	0.624

Table 7 Usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture

The trend of the results for this question is the same as that of Questions 14 and 15. Groups 4, 1, 2 and 3 felt that English is useful in transmitting Chinese culture in ascending degree. A one-way ANOVA was performed on the responses of these groups, revealing a significant difference among the groups, F (3, 129) =

10.650, $p < .001$. The differences among the groups match those found in Question 14. There are significant differences in responses between group 3 and each of the other groups respectively and between groups 2 and 4. The reasons for these differences have been discussed in section 4.2.4 where the results of Question 14 are reported.

4.2.7 DOMINANCE OF THE ROLE THAT CHINESE LANGUAGE PLAYS IN TRANSMITTING CHINESE CULTURE

Nine likert-scale items in Question 17 were used to gauge the extent to which respondents judged Chinese language as playing a dominant role in transmitting Chinese culture, as defined in section 2.3. These items probe respondents' opinions regarding whether Chinese language plays a major role in the knowledge and practice of Chinese culture and whether only Chinese language can be used to teach Chinese culture and moral values. The results are shown in the table below.

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Group 1	3.098	0.519
Group 2	2.713	0.564
Group 3	2.567	0.474
Group 4	3.425	0.528

Table 8 The dominance of Chinese language in transmitting Chinese culture

A one-way ANOVA was performed on the results of the four groups, revealing a significant difference in the groups' views concerning this matter, $F(3,129) = 16.922$, $p < .001$. It is worth pointing out that for this question, groups 1 and 4 were each significantly different from the rest of the groups. Group 1

significantly believed more strongly that Chinese language is dominant in transmitting Chinese culture compared to groups 2 and 3 whereas group 4 significantly believed so even more strongly than group 1, needless to say compared to groups 2 and 3.

It is interesting that although there were no significant differences between groups 1 and 2 for Questions 14-16, we notice a significant difference in responses between group 1 and 2 for this question. As Questions 14-16 are in general concerned with the role of English in teaching Chinese language and Chinese culture (in terms of learners' understanding of the subject, learning attitudes and understanding of Chinese culture), the absence of a significant difference in responses signifies that groups 1 and 2 share similar views on the role that English can play in teaching Chinese and Chinese culture. However, the presence of a significant difference in the responses for Question 17 indicates that groups 1 and 2 diverge in terms of how they view the role of Chinese language in transmitting Chinese culture. In particular, it is significant that group 1 believes more strongly than group 2 that Chinese language plays a dominant role in transmitting Chinese culture. Hence, from the study, it is not the case that the younger a person is, the less a person ascribes importance to Chinese language in transmitting Chinese culture. It also reveals that while group 1 is generally speaking open to the role that English can play in teaching Chinese and Chinese culture, it still holds on strongly to the belief that Chinese language plays a dominant role in transmitting Chinese

culture. This observation will be elaborated upon in the light of other findings in my study in section 5.1.

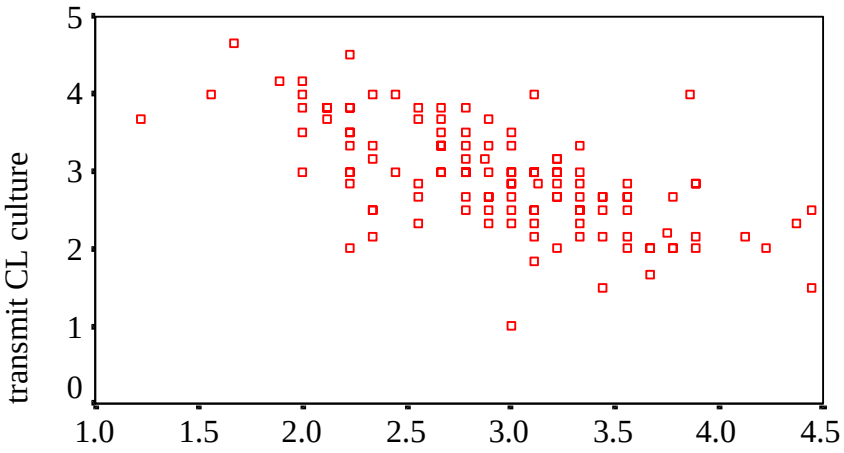
Another observation is that while for Questions 14-16, group 3 differs significantly from the other groups in the way it views the usefulness of English in teaching Chinese and Chinese culture, group 4 differs significantly from the rest of the groups in the way it views the role that Chinese language plays in transmitting Chinese culture. It seems that both the Chinese-educated and the English-educated feel most strongly for matters related to the language (be it Chinese or English) that they were instructed in. Thus, it is not the case as often highlighted in language debates that give the impression that only the Chinese-educated hold extreme views.

It is quite intriguing that the results of Question 17 are opposite of those obtained in Questions 14-16. For Questions 14, 15 and 16 respectively, the ranking of groups (according to scores in ascending order) is group 4, 1, 2, 3. For Question 17, the ranking of groups (according to scores in ascending order) is group 3, 2, 1, 4. Correlation tests were carried out on the responses for Questions 16 and 17. The reason for choosing these two questions as objects for comparisons was that both dealt with the role that language (for Question 16, English and for Question 17, Chinese) plays in transmitting Chinese culture.

4.2.8 CORRELATION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CHINESE CULTURE

Correlation tests were done on the responses for Questions 16 (reported in section 4.2.6) and 17 (reported in section 4.2.7), based on the overall 130-sample data set and for each of the groups. I will discuss the results of the 130-sample data set first. The correlation test conducted on the 130-sample data set revealed a significant Pearson Correlation of -.642 between the responses for Questions 16 and 17, $p < .001$ (2-tailed). This suggests that the more strongly people believe that English language is useful in transmitting Chinese culture, the less strongly they believe that Chinese language plays a dominant role in transmitting Chinese culture and vice versa. This is illustrated in the following graph.

Correlation between responses to Questions 16* and 17**



*Usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture

**Dominance of Chinese language in transmitting Chinese culture

Figure 6. Correlation between responses to Questions 16 and 17

The negative correlation suggests that there is a kind of dichotomy between views of the roles that English and Chinese can play in transmitting Chinese culture. This opposing perception is something which needs to be addressed should one desire to obtain a favourable response to the bilingual teaching approach as the view that English is incapable of transmitting Chinese culture may raise oppositions to the teaching approach, which may in turn affect the way students respond to such an approach.

The Pearson correlations were also done for each group's responses to Questions 16 and 17. The four groups each showed a significant correlation between the two sets of responses. Groups 2 and 3 showed very strong correlations of -.711 and -.639 respectively, $p < .001$ for both. Groups 1 and 4 had correlations of -.411 and .432 respectively, both significant at the .05 level. The fact that each group's responses to Questions 16 and 17 had significant correlations corroborates the earlier correlation test done on the 130-sample, proving that the correlation found was not based on just one or two groups, but rather across all the groups in the sample.

4.2.9 LANGUAGE PURITY

Four likert-scale items were designed in Question 18 to investigate the extent to which respondents subscribe to the notion of language purity. These items include whether English or Chinese should be purely used in the respective language

lessons and whether using English to help teach Chinese is “impure” or “messy” (terms used in the questionnaire for authenticity). The results are presented in the following table.

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Group 1	3.375	0.861
Group 2	2.954	0.915
Group 3	2.900	0.770
Group 4	3.708	0.785

Table 9 Extent to which respondents subscribe to the notion of language purity

A one-way ANOVA was performed on the responses for the groups, revealing a significant difference in the extent to which these groups subscribe to the idea of language purity, F (3, 129) = 6.453, $p < .001$. I shall point out some of the interesting observations for discussion here.

Firstly, just as for Question 17, group 1’s responses were significantly different from group 2’s responses. Group 1 subscribed more to the idea of language purity than group 2. This reveals another aspect in which group 1 is different from group 2. Although as pointed out earlier, group 1 is generally open to the idea of using English to help teach Chinese and Chinese culture, it still believes that Chinese plays a dominant role in teaching Chinese culture and that we should use only Chinese in Chinese lessons.

This is also quite interesting because one might have expected the youngest generation to subscribe least to the idea of language purity since young people are generally labelled as liberal and open-minded. In fact, group 1 subscribed

significantly more to the notion of language purity than group 3 too. Group 3 subscribed least to the notion whereas group 4 subscribed most to the notion. Thus, it allows me to say that it is not the case that the older a person is, the stronger his idea of language purity. Instead, the medium of instruction of their education received seems to be a stronger factor among the older generation over here. The English-educated (group 3) significantly subscribed less to the notion than the Chinese-educated (group 4), $p < .001$.

It also seems to be the case that the more proficient in Chinese (compared to English) a respondent is, the stronger his idea of language purity. Groups 2 and 3, which judged themselves as significantly more proficient in English than in Chinese, subscribed less to the idea of language purity than groups 1 and 4, which judged themselves as equally proficient, if not more proficient in Chinese than in English (refer section 4.1.4).

The results of Questions 17 and 18 are similar. For both questions, the ranking of groups (according to scores in ascending order) is group 3, 2, 1, 4. As pointed out earlier in section 4.2.7, this is opposite of those obtained for Questions 14-16. The reason postulated is the same. Questions 14-16 dealt with how English is useful to help teach Chinese whereas Questions 17-18 dealt with how Chinese language is dominant in transmitting Chinese culture and the related notion of language purity, with particular reference to Chinese. Thus, it is within expectations that the two sets of questions would obtain contrastive responses, even

though it was beyond my expectation that the results would turn out neatly in the reverse order for each set.

Having pointed out that the notion of language purity is related to the dominance of Chinese language in transmitting Chinese culture, correlation tests were carried out on the responses for Questions 17 and 18 to find out the nature of the relationship between these two factors. The tests were done on the overall 130-sample data set and also for each of the groups.

4.2.10 CORRELATION BETWEEN DOMINANCE OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN TRANSMITTING CHINESE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE PURITY

The results of the correlation test done on the 130-sample will be discussed first before proceeding to that of the individual groups. The test done on the 130-sample data set revealed a high Pearson correlation of .576, $p < .001$ (2-tailed). This means that the more strongly people believe that Chinese language is dominant in transmitting Chinese culture, the more strongly they believed in the idea of language purity and vice versa. This positive relationship is illustrated in the following graph.

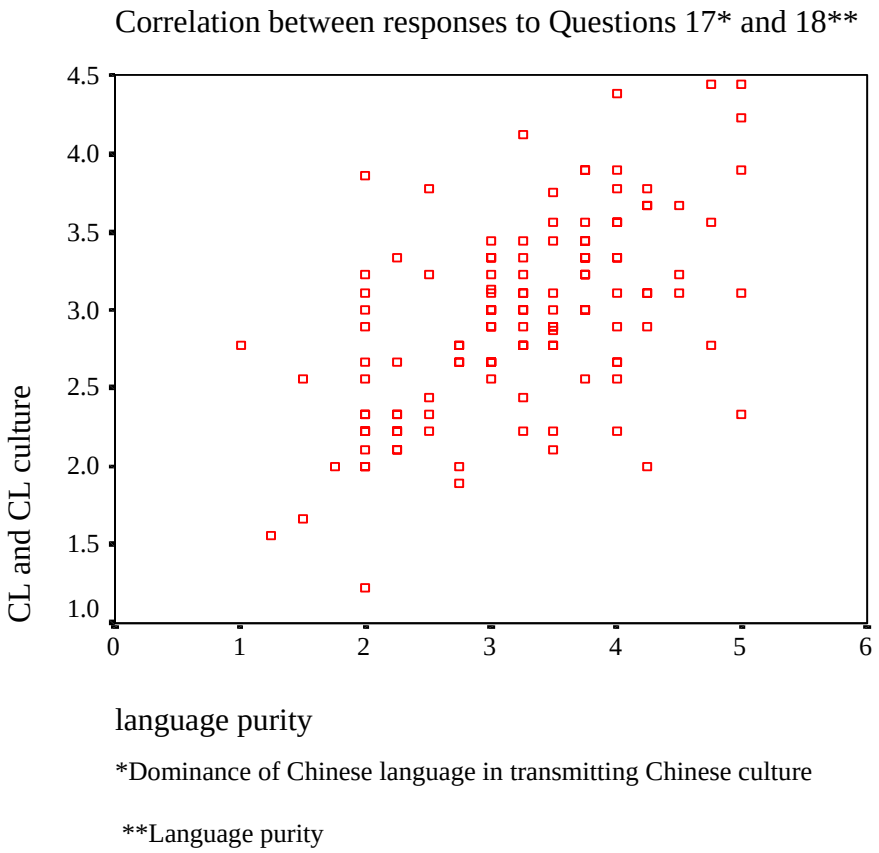


Figure 7. Correlation between responses to Questions 17 and 18

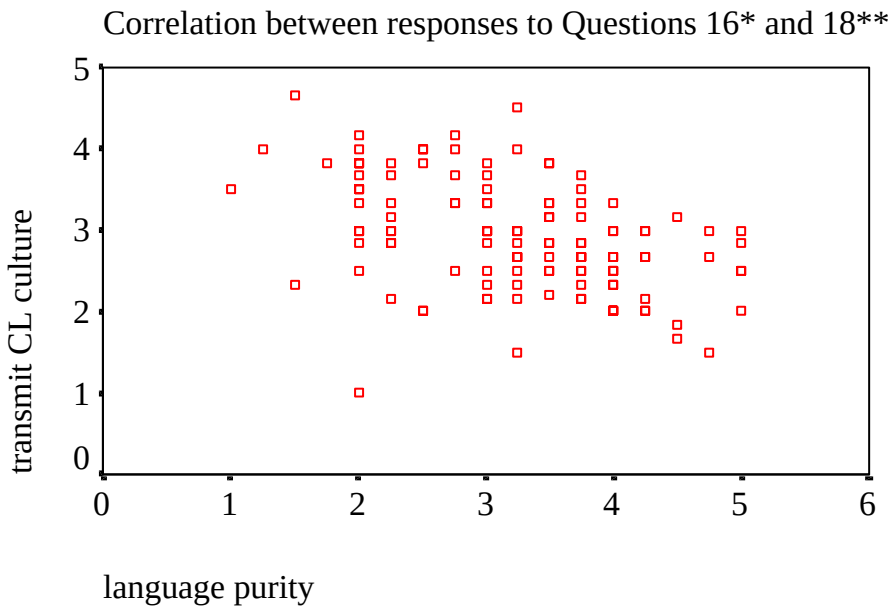
It is not surprising that responses to the two questions were positively correlated. One way of explaining the correlation is that the insistence that Chinese language is dominant in transmitting Chinese culture is, in itself, a manifestation of a form of language purity ideology. Respondents may exclude other languages from performing the function of transmitting Chinese culture and thus oppose their use in Chinese lessons. Hence, it would be expected that responses to both questions shared a positive relationship.

The Pearson correlations were also done for each group's responses to Questions 17 (reported in section 4.2.7) and 18 (reported in section 4.2.9). The four groups each showed a significant correlation between the two sets of responses. Groups 2, 3 and 4 showed very strong correlations of .462, .563 and .575 respectively, $p < .01$ for all. Group 1 had a correlation of .384, significant at the .05 level. The fact that each group's responses to both questions had significant correlations corroborates the earlier correlation test done on the 130-sample, proving that the correlation found was not based on just one or two groups, but rather across all the groups in the sample.

I have just pointed out that the belief that Chinese language is dominant in transmitting Chinese culture may be a manifestation of language purity ideology. It would be interesting to make a further observation as to how language purity ideology may or may not be related to the perceived usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture.

4.2.11 CORRELATION BETWEEN USEFULNESS OF ENGLISH IN TRANSMITTING CHINESE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE PURITY

Pearson correlation tests were conducted on the overall 130-sample and for each of the groups' responses to Questions 16 (reported in section 4.2.6) and 18 (reported in section 4.2.9). The result of the 130-sample would be reported first. There was a high Pearson correlation of -.452, $p < .001$ (2-tailed). The relationship between the two variables is illustrated in the following graph.



*Usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture

**Language purity

Figure 8. Correlation between responses to Questions 16 and 18

As shown in Figure 8, there is a negative relationship between responses to both questions. This suggests that the more strongly people believed in language purity, the less strongly they would think that English is useful in transmitting Chinese culture and vice versa. What this points out is that language purity ideology does play a part in the extent to which people perceive English to be useful in transmitting Chinese culture. As I have highlighted earlier in section 4.2.8, there is a dichotomy between the perceived roles that English and Chinese language can play in transmitting Chinese culture. I have also argued that it is necessary to address this opposing perception should we want a favourable response towards the Bilingual Approach of using English to help teach Chinese. It

is important to add that it is not just about the role of the two languages in transmitting Chinese culture, but it involves the wider issue of language purity in general. Many notions of language purity ideology are deep-rooted in people's minds and are irrational. According to Thomas (1991: 36), linguistic purism is governed primarily by "the affective attitudes (which are controlled by emotional factors) and the traditional attitudes (based on a reverence for custom)" which have a non-rational basis. It is definitely a difficult, albeit necessary, issue to address.

The Pearson correlations were also done for each group's responses to Questions 16 and 18. The groups each showed a significant correlation between the two sets of responses, except for group 1 which did not show any significant correlation. Group 4 showed a very strong correlation of -.647 respectively, $p < .001$ for all. Groups 2 and 3 had correlations of -.502 and -.399, significant at the .01 level and .05 level respectively. It is interesting that the results of the Pearson test for group 1 not only did not show a significant negative correlation, it in fact revealed a positive correlation, though insignificant. This indicates that for group 1, language purity ideology may not have a significant bearing on how they perceive English to be useful in transmitting Chinese culture and vice versa. A possible reason could be even though they may believe strongly in language purity, the pragmatic advantage of using English in aiding understanding of the Chinese culture may cause them to perceive English as useful in transmitting Chinese culture. This is reflected in respondents' statements in the questionnaires such as

"English is a medium for students and teachers to communicate if Chinese is too tough to use. English can be used to teach values which the Chinese embraced." The pragmatic advantage of using English is an important factor which may motivate people to accept the Bilingual Approach of teaching Chinese, especially for the younger generation. For others, cultural considerations still preside over pragmatic considerations.

4.2.12 FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The aim of the bilingual teaching approach of using English to help teach Chinese is to facilitate the acquisition of Chinese among school children. Thus, it is important to examine the factors affecting language acquisition. Questions 19 and 20 were designed to investigate the factors which people felt were pertinent to the learning of Chinese. These factors include the following: medium of instruction, family, government (inclusive of schools), students themselves, friends and the public's perception of Chinese. There were fifteen likert-scale items in all. Each participant answered the items and the average score for each factor was recorded.

A one-way ANOVA was performed on each group's ratings of the importance of each factor to the acquisition of Chinese. Comparing the mean score for each factor, each group's rankings of the factors were obtained. The rankings of the factors (in decreasing order of importance) for each group are listed.

Group 1: students, family, public, friends, government, medium of instruction

Group 2: students, family, friends, public, government, medium of instruction

Group 3: students, family, friends, public, government, medium of instruction

Group 4: family, public, students, friends, government, medium of instruction

As shown above, the rankings of groups 1, 2 and 3 are similar. In fact, groups 2 and 3 had exactly the same rankings of the factors. Group 1 differed from groups 2 and 3 in that Group 1 accorded more importance to public than friends in the acquisition of Chinese. All the three groups accorded the greatest importance to the students themselves. This meant that the respondents in the three groups agreed that in order to learn Chinese, it is most important that the students themselves must have positive attitudes towards learning Chinese themselves. The second factor that was accorded importance by the three groups was family.

It is interesting to look at the rankings of group 4 as it is quite different from the rest of the groups. Group 4 regarded family as the most important factor in the acquisition of Chinese, followed by the public and afterwards the students. It could reflect the Chinese philosophy of emphasizing on the family as the central unit responsible to pass down linguistic and cultural heritage. The fact that group 4 felt that the public was the second most important factor in Chinese acquisition also meant that group 4 probably felt that the external environment (in terms of family environment and public environment) played a vital role in Chinese acquisition. This is not surprising especially when Chinese language does not enjoy a high

social status in Singapore society in general (as discussed in section 4.2.3).

It is noteworthy that despite the differences, all the groups regarded the government and the medium of instruction as relatively less important factors in language acquisition. This shows that Singaporeans admit that there is a very limited extent that the government (inclusive of schools) can be of assistance with regards to language acquisition. In particular, group 4 rated the government as significantly less important than the factors that precede it in importance. The Bilingual Approach of changing the medium of instruction to include English in the Chinese language classroom is seen as contributing least to the acquisition of Chinese. In fact, all the groups rated the medium of instruction as significantly less important than all the other factors.

What this survey tells us is that the governmental initiatives (which include introducing the bilingual teaching approach in schools, improving teaching methodology, providing an easier syllabus of Chinese etc.) are not perceived as central to the acquisition of Chinese among school children. Instead, some attention could possibly be channelled to emphasize to both parents and students that language acquisition depends mainly on their own attitudes and practices rather than the schools' initiatives and that this is a conscious decision that they have to make and commit themselves to, should they wish to improve their own or their child's Chinese.

4.2.13 RESPONSE TO THE BILINGUAL APPROACH OF USING ENGLISH TO HELP TEACH CHINESE

In Question 21, participants were asked to indicate their responses towards the Bilingual Approach by circling one of the three options: agree, disagree and neither agree nor disagree. In addition, the respondents were requested to provide reasons for their decisions in Question 23. These open-ended responses were analysed with the aid of WordSmith software and its findings are discussed jointly with those of Question 21 since they deal with the same subject. For group 1, 37.5% agreed, 21.9% disagreed while 40.6% neither agreed nor disagreed. This is illustrated in the following graph.

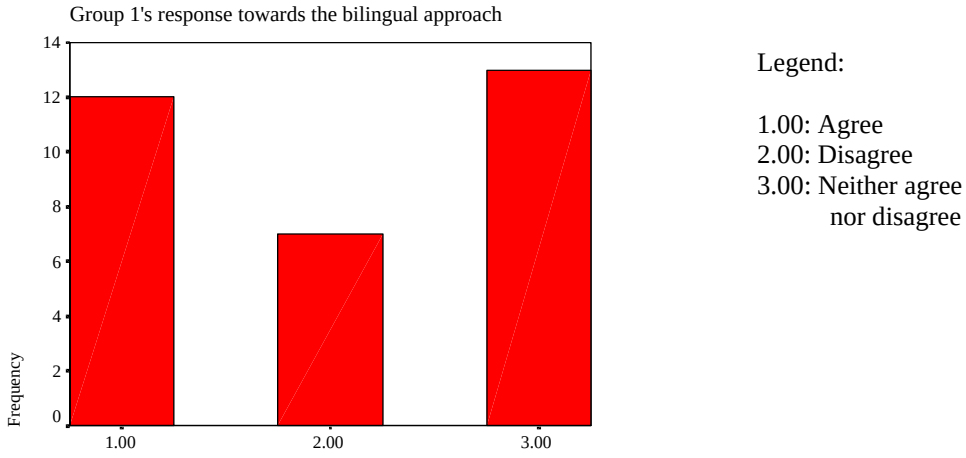


Figure 9. Group 1's response towards the Bilingual Approach

There are almost equal proportions of group 1's respondents who agreed to the approach and who neither agreed nor disagreed. The reasons cited for agreement with the approach are that the approach aids in the understanding of the meanings of Chinese words (e.g. "it helps students to understand the meaning of Chinese

words better.", "[s]tudents who are weak in Chinese would be able to cope better in this subject as they can fully understand the meaning of the Chinese character words.") and that it helps the students to understand what the teacher is saying and thus helps in the learning of Chinese (e.g. "What use is it to learn Chinese if I don't understand a heck of what the teacher is saying?"). In fact, among the responses in group 1 which agreed to the approach, one of the collocates of "Chinese" (19 instances) is "understand" (8 instances), co-occurring seven times. The concordance listing is shown.

N	Concordance
1	inese will be able to understand. it helps students to understand the meaning of Chinese words better. Y
2	ced. The important factor is that students is able to understand Chinese phrases and words through us
3	e able to cope better in this subject as they can fully understand the meaning of the Chinese character w
4	each them. there are some students who really can't understand chinese, so how are they going to learn
5	ery wrong. What use is it to learn Chinese if I don't understand a heck of what the teacher is saying? T
6	doesn't know how to speak Chinese will be able to understand. it helps students to understand the me
7	ell. it can help people who are weak in Chinese can understand it well by the language of English. I find

Figure 10. Edited concordance listing of *understand*

This shows that the respondents place on a high emphasis on the role of understanding in the learning of Chinese. With increasingly more students from English-speaking families,the respondents' concern with the ability of students to understand Chinese clearly is legitimate.

As for those who neither agreed nor disagreed to the approach, they recognized that the approach would make it easier for English-speaking pupils to understand Chinese as English can help to explain the meanings of some Chinese words that using Mandarin alone would not do the job. Instances of such responses

include “[s]ometimes we couldn’t understand the Chinese meaning given to explain some other phrases.”, “[i]t can help English speaking pupils to understand more and better in understanding Chinese.” and “English makes it more easier to understand.” It is interesting that the respondent who wrote that “[s]ometimes we couldn’t understand the Chinese meaning given to explain some other phrases.” does not come from an English-speaking family and in fact speaks Chinese most often, followed by English. If the respondent sometimes could not understand the explanations in Chinese, we can imagine the difficulties that students from English-speaking families face.

Despite recognizing that English can help in the understanding of Chinese, there is a sense that something important about Chinese will be lost if English is used in the Chinese language classroom. For example, “[w]e learn Chinese is because of knowing our origin. If our Chinese are learn using English, it make learning the subject useless.” The word “origin” connotes the idea of a source and a foundation. It can possibly be linked to the idea of ethnic and cultural roots. The words of one respondent sums up the ambivalent attitude that some may have towards the approach, “[s]ometimes English really could help in explaining some of the meanings of the Chinese words but it also can’t really explain the real meaning and the real value behind it.” Notice the use of the word “value” which could also suggest some idea of moral values associated with the language. Thus, while the practical consideration concerning the understanding of the language may

be a compelling reason for some to endorse the approach, cultural considerations act as constraining factors at the same time.

For those who oppose the approach, a common reason cited is the fear that the approach may create a reliance on English to be used in learning Chinese. Examples include “in time, students will depend most on English to learn Chinese. furthermore, some students are only interested with English is used.”, “students would tend to use English more frequently” and “[i]t will then be an English class.” There is a need to address this fear that the approach may result in a reliance on English and perhaps educate the public on specific ways in which this approach would pre-empt this from happening. By informing the public, it can set fears at ease and perhaps help parents to cooperate and work together with the schools.

Other reasons cited for opposing the Bilingual Approach smack of language purity ideology. These include statements such as “[w]e only speak Chinese during Chinese lesson”, “to input ‘pure’ Chinese, English should not be used at all.”, “[i]t is very funny and hard using English to teach Chinese.” and “English and Chinese are two different language.” While it is still possible to treat the last statement as a factual response, it is hard to do that for the rest of the statements. The idea of “pure” Chinese to be protected from English is clearly an indication of language purity ideology. The use of the word “funny” suggests that the respondent feels using English to help teach Chinese is unnatural but yet finds it hard to explain why she feels this way (or does not know why she feels this way). This is something

very common of language purity ideology. The justification of the ideology is often hard to be articulated.

Another point is that among the responses which opposed the Bilingual Approach, the word “should” occurred 5 times (out of the 134 types). The following is its concordance listing.

N	Concordance
1	portant. It willthen be an Englishclass. Chinese should be used for teaching Chinese and Englishs
2	reallygreat difficultyin understanding, but he/she should look up Chinese dictionary/helpfulresourc
3	e should be used for teaching Chinese and Englishshould be taught separately to prevent the student
4	e of instruction during Chinese lessons.]] Chinese should be only used to teach Chinese, so that ther
5	ng Chinese lesson to input 'pure' Chinese, Englishshould not be used at all. Otherwise in time, stude

Figure 11. Edited concordance listing of *should*

As the concordance listing shows, the word “should” (or its negative variant “should not”) is mostly used by the respondents to assert the language which they would like (or would not like) to see in the Chinese language classroom. The use of the modal operator “should” which in these instances indicates a sense of obligation, suggests how strongly the respondents feel towards this issue. As to what grounds the respondents base their obligations on is subject to various possibilities, among them being the language purity ideology as mentioned earlier. For example, in the last concordance listing of “should”, its negative variant “should not” is used to protest against the use of English to keep the input of Chinese in the Chinese language classroom ‘pure’.

As for group 2, 52.6% agreed, 18.4% disagreed and 28.9% neither agreed nor disagreed. The following graph illustrates the results.

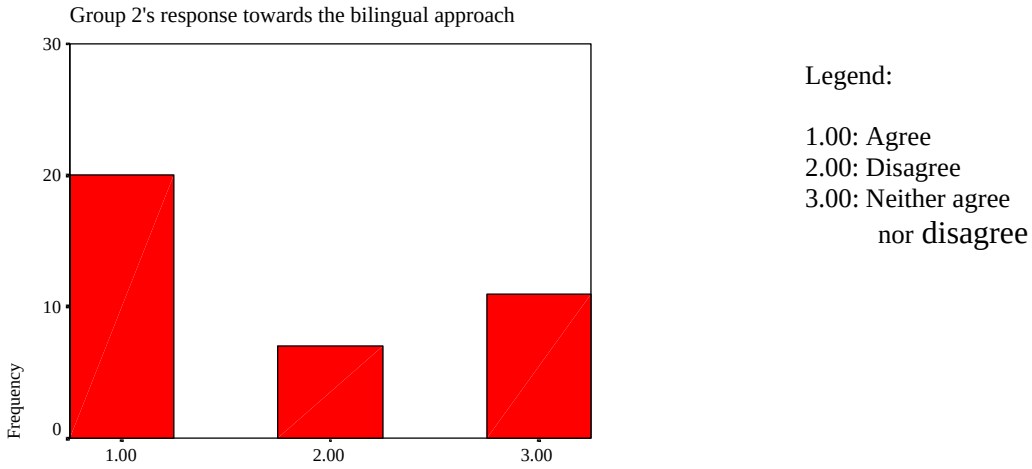


Figure 12. Group 2's response towards the Bilingual Approach

The reasons cited by more than 50% of Group 2's respondents who supported the approach include English being an aid to the understanding of Chinese language and that this approach lowers the affective filter that English-speaking students have towards learning Chinese. Examples of the responses include "[i]t help people weaker in Chinese to understand the language better", "[i]t helps these students grasp meanings of words that would otherwise be ignored or forgotten if Chinese alone is used to teach", "it will give more motivation.", "it reduces the fear and stress level of students who are weak in Chinese." and "it makes Chinese less intimidating".

The respondents view the approach as a help to English-speaking students. One of the collocates of "English" (16 instances) is "help" (8 instances). They co-occur 4 times. The concordance listing is presented.

N	Concordance
1	r command of English Language. using English to help explain the Chinese Language can be helpful
2	e been better accomplished if english was used to help teach Chinese. I disagree that using english w
3	reason why we can't use our strength in English to help in our struggling Chinese. [[On the contrary,
4	n Chinese to understand the language better it will help English-speaking students in learning Chinese

Figure 13. Edited concordance listing of *help*

It is significant that the respondents who agreed to the approach view it as a tool to help the students from English-speaking families learn Chinese. This is something which is absent from the responses of people who may object to the approach. In fact, one group 2 respondent who opposed the approach employed the phrase "replacing Chinese with English" to refer to the approach. This meant that the respondent saw English as playing a supplanting role, instead of a supplemental role in the approach. This could be due to a lack of understanding of the approach itself (highly unlikely since it was clearly explained in the questionnaire) or it could be a reflection of how people tend to view English and Chinese as conflicting. The latter has been mentioned earlier in section 4.2.8, with reference to the role that each language can play in transmitting Chinese culture.

It must be said that although the respondents approved of the Bilingual Approach, they also added that other factors such as parents and friends contribute to the acquisition of Chinese. Examples of such sentiments include "[i]f parents have a positive attitude and reinforce the importance of Chinese, then perhaps the child would be able to learn Chinese Language better. parents attitude towards

Chinese Language has an effect on their child." and "other factors such as family, friends and environment come into play too".

Among those who opposed the approach, this point was also raised but in a different stance. They did not see the Bilingual Approach as contributing to Chinese language acquisition and emphasized the importance of factors that would contribute to it. Examples include "learning Chinese needs immersion into the language", "I feel that language should be acquired not only from the school but from other sources of environment, e.g. family, friends, etc." and "[t]o learn Chinese, one ought to: listen Chinese more, read more Chinese, write more Chinese and also to speak more Chinese." The main point of these responses was immersion in the Chinese language.

Other reasons cited by group 2 respondents who opposed the approach were that this approach would be confusing to both teachers and students, students would tend to think in the English medium and that the meanings of Chinese concepts may be lost or distorted. Basically, the respondents who stated these reasons saw English at variance with Chinese. The WordSmith analysis provides evidence to this reading. One of the collocates of "English" (14 instances) was "Chinese" (28 instances), co-occurring 10 times. Out of the 10 co-occurrences, English is used negatively with reference to Chinese 5 times. The concordance listing is presented.

N	Concordance
1	to express himself. Meaninglost/contorted when Englishused to explainChinese concepts. The sta
2	e Language,tendency for students to confuse both Englishand Chinese usage Messy for the Chinese
3	for the Chinese Languageteacher. One moment in Englishand another in Chinese. Most Chinese Lan
4	teach Chinese, the pupil(s) willtend to think in the Englishmedium instead of Chinese. Pupils who ar
5	immersioninto the languagereplacing Chinese with Englishwould encourage the student to switch to

Figure 14. Edited concordance listing of *English*

It is clear that for these respondents, English does not help in the learning of Chinese but instead hinders it.

A lack of confidence in the ability of students and teachers to use this approach to their benefit also prevents many from endorsing the approach. Instances include, quoted verbatim, “Don’t know whether the English standard of present Chinese teachers are high enough.”, “it is haphazard”, “May propagate Singlish which is problematic if students cannot codeswitch.” and “tendency for students to confuse both English and Chinese usage. Messy for the Chinese Language teacher. One moment in English and another in Chinese. Most Chinese Language teacher are proficient in mother tongue and not in English Language.” Besides reflecting sadly about our levels of language proficiency in the two languages, these responses also suggest a lack of confidence in the way the approach is being carried out.

By using the term “haphazard”, one respondent assumed that this is not a systematic approach. It is also interesting that a respondent raised the issue of codeswitching. The respondent was rather pessimistic about the ability of students to codeswitch despite the fact that bilingualism is one of the central tenets of

education in Singapore. Codeswitching is regarded as one of the distinguishing feature of bilinguals or multilinguals. As Romaine (2000: 55) points out, “learning to speak more than one language often involves putting together material from two languages. This is a part of the normal process of growing up bilingually and acquiring competence in more than one language.” If our aim is to raise bilinguals in our society, codeswitching should be used in language lessons. To allay fears that this would result in a less competent use of language, students should be exposed to acceptable forms of codeswitching in the language classrooms.

Like those respondents in group 1 who opposed the approach, group 2 respondents provided reasons which have tints of language purity ideology. Examples of their responses include “Chinese should be taught in Chinese.” and “[d]egrades Chinese Language”.

For those in group 2 who neither agreed nor disagreed to the approach, some respondents recognized that the Bilingual Approach would help to explain the meanings of Chinese words and that it would build students’ confidence in the language but others were negative about the effects of this approach on Chinese language learning. One of the collocates of “Chinese” (27 instances) was “learning” (5 instances), with 5 co-occurrences. Out of those 5 co-occurrences, 3 dealt with the impact of the approach on Chinese language learning. The concordance listing is shown.

N	Concordance
1	inese. And these children may just neglect learning Chinese and take the easy way out. helps to expla
2	. However, it does not facilitate the learning of the Chinese Language when the students continue to t
3	re it does not contribute at all to the learning of the Chinese Language. [[Proposal of having total Man

Figure 15. Edited concordance listing of *Chinese*

Another objection to the approach is that students may value English more than Chinese. Examples of such responses are "[t]he language spoken is also important in affecting the mindset of the students.", "may seem like we're endorsing English as a more basic language, more useful than Chinese.", "[c]auses people to focus more on English than Chinese. to a certain extent, prevents students from 'going all the way' to pursue excellence in Chinese. it's distracting." Perhaps we should emphasize to the students who are studying Chinese under this Bilingual Approach that the use of English does not mean that it is more essential than Chinese.

Other objections include the confusion that the approach may cause (e.g. "students better in their respective languages may find it disruptive." and "it may also be quite a disorder/confusing") and that the approach would impinge on the purity of Chinese. Statements such as "Chinese would be taught no longer in pure Chinese but a mixture", "the essence of Chinese cannot be expressed adequately by English all the time." and "not pure when spoken" indicate that respondents feel that using English in Chinese lessons would contaminate Chinese. It is interesting that a few of these respondents recognize that the approach would aid in the understanding of some Chinese words but they value the idea of language purity

even more. The words of one respondent sums it up, “it should be helpful and it is an innovative method, but I feel strongly for my mother tongue thus cherish the “purity” of the language if learnt on its own it is more meaningful.”

Next, 73.3% of group 3’s respondents agreed to the Bilingual Approach, 6.7% disagreed while 20.0% neither agreed nor disagreed. The graph below illustrates the results.

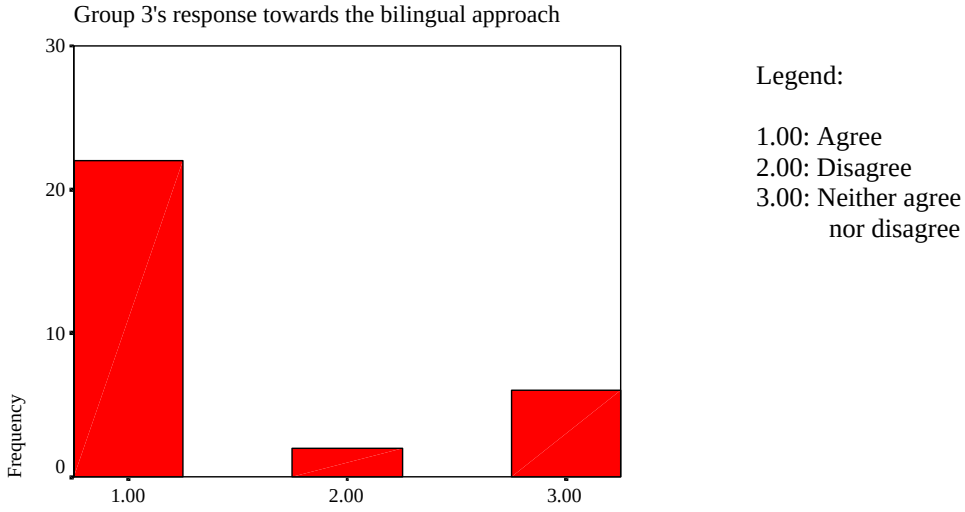


Figure 16. Group 3’s response towards the Bilingual Approach

The majority of group 3’s respondents agreed to the Bilingual Approach. This could be due to the fact that they are English-educated themselves and hence foresee the advantage that English can bring about if it is used to help teach Chinese.

The reasons cited by group 3’s respondents include familiar ones such as the approach would help students’ understanding of Chinese words and that the approach would increase students’ interest in the Chinese language. Examples

include “as he or she gets to recognise more and more of Chinese characters, they will pick up interest and begin to appreciate Chinese instead of being disgusted with it.”, “[i]f you use Chinese completely to teach Chinese, guaranteed they will lose interest and get nowhere.” and “[i]t will help the students understand the Chinese meaning of the word, and the learning of Chinese more enjoyable.”

Some also mentioned that the approach would result in better communication between students and teachers. Instances of such responses include “if the teacher just speak Chinese and not explain, children (primary) especially will not ask for an explanation if they don’t understand.”, “[e]asy to put across the question/answer if find difficult to explain” and “in using English, there will be better communication between students and teachers.”

They were also quick to add that the approach would be helpful especially for children from English-speaking families. For instance, a respondent wrote “children these days come from English-educated homes and thus are weaker in Chinese. using a language familiar to them to teach Chinese may make Chinese less intimidating.” One respondent even added that “[u]sing English in chinese lesson not only help the English speaking children it also help those chinese speaking children who are weak in English. both benefit it.” Perhaps we could further explore whether the approach would be useful for those who are weak in English. A respondent also mentioned that this approach should act as a “headstart” and not to take over formal Chinese learning.

The few objections to the approach include the apprehension that some Chinese words would be difficult to explain in English and that "learning Chinese language meant learning how to speak and use the language" (AT). It is interesting that the latter comment came from a respondent who spoke Chinese more than English and rated himself as more proficient in Chinese than English. Thus it is not surprising that he did not value the approach as he probably would not have experienced the agony that children from English-speaking families face in learning Chinese. As for the former comment, it is a justifiable concern that many have over this issue, even among those who support the approach.

As for those who neither agreed nor disagreed to the approach, there was a sense of reluctance among some to comment because they felt that this was still a relatively new approach. Their responses were "[s]till too early to judge the result only time will tell." and "English language is the mainstream in teaching for the past 40 years. Learning of Chinese started recently. It is very subjective."

Other responses include a call for Chinese learning to be done the "fun-way". However, there were two different suggestions as to how to make Chinese language learning fun. One respondent mentioned that once the students become more competent in Chinese, the lessons should be conducted in solely the Chinese medium and that there could be more projects and role-plays, removing the emphasis on examinations. Another respondent proposed 'fun' in another way. The suggestion was that "Chinese lessons to be taught in English should be encouraged

so as to instill a strong sense of learning Chinese in a simple and 'fun-way'". The Ministry of Education is looking into ways to make Chinese language learning more innovative and fun. It would be interesting perhaps to investigate what the students deem as 'fun' ways of learning and whether the medium of instruction in the Chinese language classroom would play any role in it.

Last but not least, 40% of group 4's respondents agreed to the approach, 36.7% disagreed while 23.3% neither agreed nor disagreed. The results are shown in the following graph.

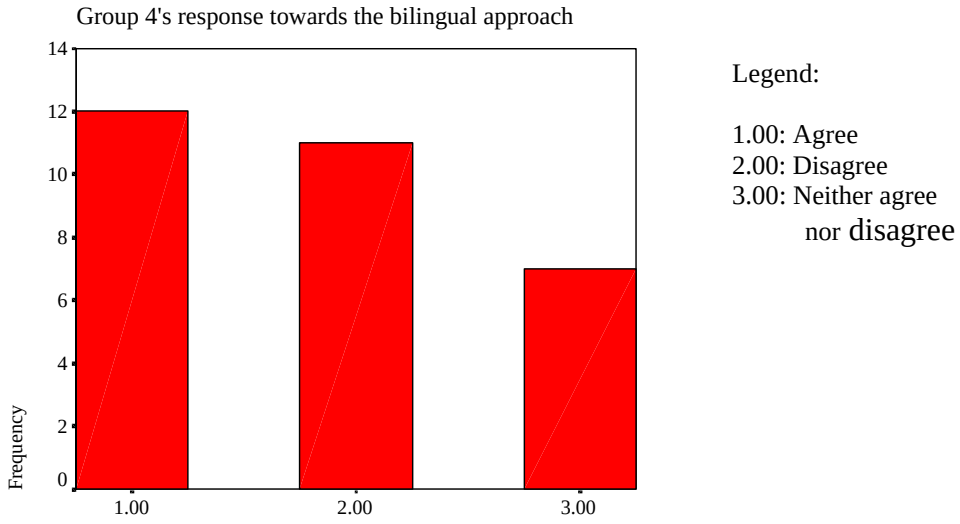


Figure 17. Group 4's response towards the Bilingual Approach

It is noteworthy that there are almost equal proportions of group 4's respondents who agreed and who disagreed to the Bilingual Approach. The reasons cited by those who supported the approach include typical ones such as it helps students' understanding of Chinese (e.g. "English really can help those who are

weak in Chinese language to understand Chinese easily.", "teachers' explanations can create a quicker and deeper impression on students and allow them to understand more quickly" (AT) and "if you do not use English to explain Chinese, the students will utterly not understand." (AT)) and that students will be more interested in learning Chinese (e.g. "students may not be interested to learn chinese at all if they do not understand the language.", "it makes Chinese more interesting", "can help weak students in Chinese to gain an interest in learning the language." and "today's students do not have much interest in learning Chinese, so by using English to teach, they will have more interest" (AT)).

Amidst the above reasons given in support of the approach, there is a tinge of lamentation and acceptance of the status of the Chinese language in the present Singapore society. This is revealed in responses such as "[a]ctually the lowering of Chinese language standards should be due to the absence of a practical usage space. No commercial use, many occasions also do not require Chinese to be used. All the governmental departments, schools, banks and important organizations use English primarily, so can Chinese language not go downhill?" (AT) and "because our country is a country which uses English a lot, at many government departments, sometimes we can't see a single Chinese word, making people to constantly go towards English. Some students do not need to use Chinese words once they work in the society. Imperceptibly Chinese slowly weakens, making one generation's Chinese worse than the previous." (AT) Due to a recognition of the roles that

Chinese and English play in today's Singapore society, these respondents view the approach as a practical method that is needed to help students understand the Chinese lesson.

Objections to the approach include the argument that students may think in the English medium instead of the Chinese medium. For example, respondents wrote "[t]hey will find it hard to speak/write in Chinese if they don't think in English." and "making the students think in the Mandarin medium is the only way for them to speak correct Mandarin" (AT).

The respondents also did not endorse the approach because of the language purity ideology. This is shown in responses such as "using English in Chinese lessons would make the students' knowledge in Chinese impure" and "should use pure Mandarin to learn Chinese language" (AT). These responses were single statements that were not further elaborated upon. The statements were inexplicit as to what exactly about Chinese language would be made impure by the use of English.

A point raised in relation to the language purity ideology is that Mandarin plays a very important role in transmitting Chinese culture through the Chinese language lesson. The following statements exemplify this point: "only Mandarin can be used to teach Chinese language, because only this can allow Chinese culture to be carried forward." (AT) and "using Mandarin in Chinese language lessons makes students better understand Chinese culture and moral values." (AT) Through

these responses, we can see that Mandarin has acquired the status of not simply a language, but also as a cultural vehicle. To these respondents, using the Bilingual Approach would be tantamount to removing or at least contaminating this vehicle.

Among the group 4 respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed to the approach, some of them felt that while the approach would aid students' understanding of Chinese words, it would disadvantage them in their understanding of Chinese in some ways. The following responses illustrate this: "I feel that English may make students not understand Chinese culture but it is useful when students are really weak." and "[o]n the one hand, it'll help in gaining understanding certain words/expressions but ultimately the essence of chinese can also be felt through the language itself." According to these respondents, the understanding of Chinese culture and the "essence" of Chinese would be hampered if the Bilingual Approach is used.

The use of the term "essence" is striking. The word "essence" refers to the most indispensable quality of something. Admittedly, it is arguable as to what is the most indispensable quality of Chinese. To some, it may be the Chinese culture, to others it may be the ability to speak Mandarin, yet to some others it may mean a synthesis of various factors. What is significant is that Mandarin is seen to exemplify at least part of this essence and using the Bilingual Approach is seen to hamper the essence from being felt. From this, it can be gathered that to some,

Mandarin is not merely a language but it brings out the essence of Chinese, whatever it may be.

Overall, out of the 130 respondents who answered the questionnaires, 50.8% agreed to the approach, 20.8% disagreed whilst 28.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. The results are illustrated in the following graph.

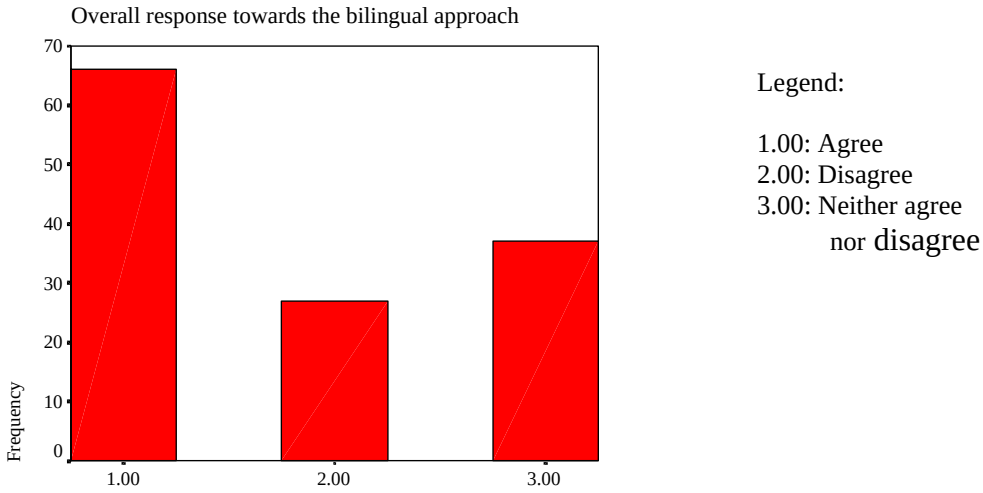


Figure 18. Overall response towards the Bilingual Approach

It is worth pointing out that only about half of the respondents agreed despite the fact that out of the four groups, only one group was Chinese-educated. This proves that reservations concerning the approach do not come solely from the Chinese-educated community in Singapore.

The most frequent reasons stated by those who supported the Bilingual Approach were that it would aid students' understanding of Chinese words and that students would be more interested in learning Chinese. On the other hand, those who disagreed to the approach tended to view the approach as sullying the purity of

Chinese. They were also worried that it would be detrimental if students continue to "think in the English medium". Another interesting thing to note is that almost 30% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. Many of these respondents recognized that the approach would help students understand Chinese words better but were held back from endorsing the approach as they felt that something important about Chinese (its culture, moral values etc.) would be lost if this approach was adopted. One thing noticeable from the discussion is that to many respondents, Mandarin is more than a system of sounds and words used for communication and is in fact highly valued as a cultural vehicle, especially among the Chinese-educated community and perhaps more surprisingly, among those in their teens. Through this evaluation of responses to the Bilingual Approach, we can see the interplay of linguistic and cultural convictions at work influencing reactions to the approach.

4.2.14 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE BILINGUAL APPROACH

The questionnaire not only asked for the respondents' approval or disapproval of the Bilingual Approach of teaching Chinese, it also investigated the respondents' opinions concerning specific considerations of the approach such as the group of learners who should be taught using this approach, the uses of English in the Chinese language classroom, the people who are allowed to use English in the classroom and the duration that the Bilingual Approach should be adopted in the classroom. For each factor, the respondents were asked to indicate their views by

choosing one option out of four options. The results of the factors will be discussed below.

Group of learners who should be taught using the Bilingual Approach

The results of the question are presented in the table below.

Options	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Overall
1: only those from English-speaking families who are weak in Chinese	31.3%	52.6%	33.3%	50.0%	42.3%
2: all students weak in Chinese	28.1%	26.3%	43.3%	26.7%	30.8%
3: every student (strong and weak in Chinese)	15.6%	7.9%	23.3%	0%	11.5%
4: not applicable (should not use this Bilingual Approach)	25%	13.2%	0%	23.3%	15.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 10 The Bilingual Approach: group of learners

The majority of respondents in groups 2 and 4 think that the Bilingual Approach should be used to help only those from English-speaking families who are weak in Chinese. It is interesting that almost equal proportions of respondents in each of groups 1 (31.3% and 28.1%) and 3 (33.3% and 43.3%) chose options 1 and 2. This could reflect that respondents in groups 1 and 3 might have the view that many current students, even those who are not from English-speaking families, might be more proficient in English than Chinese and hence, the Bilingual Approach would aid their acquisition of Chinese. This interpretation is highly possible, especially with part of the responses coming from group 1 who are current students themselves.

The fact that the proportion of respondents who chose option 3 were the least across groups 1, 2 and 4 shows that the respondents were generally not willing to see the Bilingual Approach being used for all students. It might be that they see no advantage of the Bilingual Approach being adopted for students strong in Chinese. However, the fact that a small proportion of the respondents chose the option means that there are people who believe that the Bilingual Approach would be useful even to those strong in Chinese. It is worth looking into the possibility of adopting this approach even for students who are strong in Chinese. Since one of Singapore's educational outcomes is to develop the child into a bilingual, the use of both languages in the classroom merits consideration. It is worth highlighting that none of group 4's respondents selected this option, giving proof that they are very reluctant to allow English to enter the Chinese language classroom. At most, they would allow this teaching approach to be used on those students from English-speaking families who are weak in Chinese. Their reluctance to allow English in the Chinese language classroom is heightened by the fact that more than 20% of its respondents chose option 4. What is more striking is that more than 20% of group 1's respondents also chose option 4, suggesting that not only the Chinese-educated are against this idea, but many of the younger generation are resistant to this idea too.

Overall, more than 70% of the respondents are of the view that the Bilingual Approach should be used to help those who are weak in Chinese. About

40% of these respondents feel that it should be restricted to those from English-speaking families whereas 30% feel that it should be extended to all students who are weak in Chinese. Relatively smaller proportions of respondents (about 12% and 15% respectively) either feel that the approach can be used for every student or object to the use of the approach entirely.

Uses of English in the Chinese language classroom

The results of this question are presented in the table below.

Options	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Overall
1: explain meanings of Chinese words	62.5%	57.9%	56.7%	66.7%	60.8%
2: communicate with the teachers or students	6.3%	0%	0%	3.3%	2.3%
3: do all of the above, as and when teachers and students find it helpful	15.6%	34.2%	43.3%	10.0%	26.2%
4: not applicable (should not use this Bilingual Approach)	15.6%	7.9%	0%	20.0%	10.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 11 The Bilingual Approach: Uses of English in the Chinese language classroom

The majority of respondents in each group chose option 1. This meant that most respondents would like to restrict the use of English in the Chinese lesson to the explanation of meanings of Chinese words. The next popular option (for all groups except group 4) was to use English both to explain meanings and for communication purposes. For group 4, the second popular option was option 4,

proving once again the reluctance of a fraction of its respondents towards supporting the Bilingual Approach.

Overall, about 61% of respondents would like to restrict the use of English to just the explanation of meanings of Chinese words. Only a very small fraction (2%) of respondents would restrict the use of English for communication purposes. About 26% of respondents are open to the Bilingual Approach being used both to explain meanings and to communicate within the classroom. About 11% of respondents object to the approach entirely. The fact that the proportion of respondents who chose option 1 was more than double that who chose option 3 meant that there are many respondents who are unwilling to allow English to be used freely in the Chinese language classroom and probably do not want teachers and students to over-rely on it.

People who should be allowed to use English in the classroom

The results of this question are illustrated in the table below.

Options	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Overall
1: only teachers	18.8%	13.2%	6.7%	30.0%	16.9%
2: only students	0%	0%	0%	3.3%	0.8%
3: both teachers and students	59.4%	76.3%	93.3%	40.0%	67.7%
4: not applicable (should not use this Bilingual Approach)	18.8%	10.5%	0%	26.7%	13.8%
Missing answers	3.1%	-	-	-	0.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 12 The Bilingual Approach: Who can use English in the classroom

The majority of respondents in each group chose option 3. This means that most respondents are open to the idea of both teachers and students using English in the classroom. Group 3 is most supportive of this idea, with the highest percentage (93.3%) of respondents who chose this option whereas group 4 is least supportive of this idea, with the lowest percentage (40.0%) of respondents choosing this option. Relatively small proportions of respondents in groups 1, 2 and 3 (less than 20% each) think that only teachers should be allowed to use English in the Chinese language classroom. 30% of group 4's respondents feel that only teachers should use English. This could possibly be due to the mentality that teachers are superior over students and hence teachers should be the ones retaining control over the use of English as a tool in the classroom. Corroborating what I have discussed earlier, group 4 is most resistant towards this Bilingual Approach (with close to 27% choosing option 4) whereas group 3 is most supportive towards this approach (none of its respondents chose option 4).

Overall, about 68% of respondents feel that both teachers and students should be allowed to use English in the Chinese language classroom. This is about four times the percentage of respondents who feel that only teachers should use English. Around 14% of respondents indicated their resistance towards the Bilingual Approach and only about 1% of the respondents felt that only students should use English. Only 1 respondent did not answer the question.

Duration of the Bilingual Approach

The results of this question are presented in the following table.

Options	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Overall
1: until students have shown an interest in learning Chinese	0%	10.5%	13.3%	6.7%	7.7%
2: until students have improved their Chinese	9.4%	21.1%	16.7%	16.7%	16.2%
3: as long as it is still helpful in any way to the students	68.8%	55.3%	70.0%	40.0%	58.5%
4: not applicable (should not use this Bilingual Approach)	21.9%	13.2%	0%	33.3%	16.9%
Missing answers	-	-	-	3.3%	0.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 13 The Bilingual Approach: Duration of the Bilingual Approach

The majority of respondents in each group feel that the Bilingual Approach should be in use as long as it is still helpful in any way to the students. A sizeable proportion of group 4's respondents (33.3%) oppose the use of the Bilingual Approach. Group 3 is most supportive of this approach, with none in the group choosing option 4.

Overall, more than half of the respondents chose option 3. The percentage of respondents who feel that the approach should be continued till the students have improved their Chinese is about twice the percentage of those who feel that the approach should be continued till the students have shown an interest in learning Chinese. This could possibly reflect the result-oriented mindset of people as they expect to see a positive effect of the approach (in terms of improvement in

linguistic ability) before ceasing the use of the approach. About 17% of respondents oppose the approach and 1 respondent did not answer the question.

4.3 FACTORS AFFECTING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE BILINGUAL APPROACH

The questionnaire included a wide variety of variables to obtain background knowledge of the respondents (e.g. exact age of respondents, proficiencies in language skills etc.) and to acquire views on related issues surrounding the Bilingual Approach (e.g. language purity, importance of factors contributing to language acquisition etc.). By carrying out a regression analysis of these variables, the following factors are found to contribute significantly to respondents' attitudes towards the Bilingual Approach:

1) Usefulness of English in transmitting Chinese culture
2) Language purity
3) Importance of medium of instruction in language acquisition
4) Importance of government in language acquisition

These factors are ranked in order of importance. It is significant that the usefulness of English to transmit Chinese culture should be the top factor in affecting attitudes towards the Bilingual Approach. This reveals that the issue of Chinese culture and its relation with the English language plays a critical role in how people respond to the Bilingual Approach.

Language purity also plays a part in whether people approve or disapprove of the Bilingual Approach. This confirms my earlier hypothesis that more complex issues are at stake than merely approval or disapproval of the approach. It also highlights the point that besides simply telling people the positive results of the approach through programme evaluation, there is a more important need of changing mindsets should we want to encourage people to support the approach.

The other two factors of the importance of medium of instruction and government in language acquisition would understandably affect attitudes towards the approach since the approach is about making changes to the medium of instruction in the classroom and the schools are under the jurisdiction of the state. For example, if one thinks that the medium of instruction and the government are unimportant to language acquisition, the person is unlikely to support the Bilingual Approach.

In all, attitudes towards the Bilingual Approach are dependent on views related to culture and language (e.g. whether English can help to transmit Chinese culture, language purity) and views on factors contributing to language acquisition. These findings are also corroborated by my earlier analysis of the sentence completion responses in which respondents gave reasons for their reactions towards the approach.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

This study sets out to examine responses of Singaporean Chinese towards the Bilingual Approach in order to reveal the intimate interplay between language ideologies and receptiveness to a language teaching approach. Before I conclude the study, let me recap on its key findings:

1. The motivations for wanting to improve one's proficiency in English were utilitarian in orientation whereas the ones for Chinese were both pragmatically driven and culturally based. Given the fact that English is becoming the first language of many children in Singapore as discussed in section 1.5, it is surprising that the younger generation (groups 1 and 2) wanted to improve their Chinese for ethnic and cultural reasons.
2. The reasons cited by respondents who wanted to improve their children's proficiencies in the languages were similarly polarized according to the above observation.
3. More than half of the respondents associated English with high prestige and commercial value. A fraction of the respondents found Chinese a more affective language than English. However, nearly half of the respondents felt that English and Chinese were equal in terms of their affective functions.

4. Group 4 least felt that English is useful to learn and improve Chinese and improve attitudes towards Chinese learning whereas group 3 most felt so. This shows that for the older generation, the stream of education does affect their responses to the Bilingual Approach. Across groups, the respondents were more optimistic that the Bilingual Approach would help improve attitudes towards Chinese language learning than help students to learn and improve their Chinese.
5. Group 4 least felt that English is useful in transmitting Chinese culture whereas group 3 most felt so. This reinforces the earlier observation that for the older generation, the stream of education affects their responses to the Bilingual Approach. Groups 1 and 2 shared similar views on the role that English can play in teaching Chinese language and Chinese culture. However, group 1 believed more strongly than group 2 that Chinese language plays a dominant role in transmitting Chinese culture. While group 1 was open to the role that English can play in teaching Chinese language and Chinese culture, it still believed that Chinese language plays a dominant role in transmitting Chinese culture. Across all groups, there was a negative correlation between the beliefs that English language is useful in transmitting Chinese culture and the dominant role of Chinese in transmitting Chinese culture. This suggests that the respondents perceived a

dichotomy in terms of the roles that English and Chinese can play in transmitting Chinese culture.

6. Group 1 subscribed significantly more to the idea of language purity than groups 2 and 3. This shows that it does not mean that the older a person is, the stronger his idea of language purity. Groups 1 and 4 which were equally, if not more proficient in Chinese relative to English believed more strongly in language purity than groups 2 and 3 which were more proficient in English than in Chinese. The belief in language purity was also found to be positively correlated with the belief that Chinese language is dominant in transmitting Chinese culture as the latter might be a manifestation of language purity ideology. On the other hand, the belief in language purity was negatively correlated with the belief that English is useful in transmitting Chinese culture. An interesting observation is that this negative correlation was not observed for group 1. One possible reason postulated is that although group 1 believed strongly in language purity, it might also have seen the pragmatic advantage of using English in aiding understanding of Chinese culture, hence facilitating the transmission of Chinese culture.
7. Groups 1, 2 and 3 ranked students and family as the first and second most important factor in language acquisition respectively whereas group 4 ranked family and the public as the first and second most important factor. This illustrates the tendency of the Chinese-educated to place more

emphasis on the environment rather than the individual. Across all the groups, the government and medium of instruction were rated as relatively less important factors in language acquisition.

8. Only half of the respondents agreed to the Bilingual Approach. Reservations concerning the approach did not come only from the Chinese-educated community in Singapore. While many recognized that the approach would help students understand Chinese words better, they also felt that something important about Chinese (its culture, moral values etc.) would be lost. Mandarin was highly valued as a cultural vehicle especially among the Chinese-educated community and among the teens. About 40% of respondents felt that the Bilingual Approach should be restricted to those from English-speaking families whereas 30% felt that it should be extended to all students who are weak in Chinese. About 61% of respondents would like to restrict the use of English to the explanation of meanings of Chinese words alone. About 68% of respondents felt that both teachers and students should be allowed to use English in the Chinese language classroom. About 59% of respondents felt that the approach should be continued as long as it is still helpful in any way to the students.

In all, we have seen that language ideologies such as language purity affect responses to the Bilingual Approach through influencing the way that people view the English language and the Chinese language in relation to each other and the

roles that they can each play in transmitting Chinese culture. We have also seen how the belief in language purity is not necessarily related to age. Greater proficiency in Chinese relative to English seems to influence the belief in language purity in a positive direction.

Among the older generation, it has been found that the stream of education creates opposing reactions to the Bilingual Approach. The English-educated were most optimistic that English is useful to help students learn and improve Chinese, improve attitudes towards Chinese learning and transmit Chinese culture whereas the Chinese-educated were least positive about it.

In addition, I also made some interesting observations about group 1, the youngest group of respondents in my study. Unlike what I hypothesized, the younger generation did not react more positively to the Bilingual Approach. In fact, about 40% of group 1 respondents were ambivalent about the approach, conflicted by both pragmatic and cultural considerations. They also did not devalue the role that Chinese language plays in transmitting Chinese culture as they were the group with the second highest mean score for the relevant likert-scale. Nevertheless, as hypothesized, there was a relatively high proportion of younger generation (about 22%) who were resistant to the Bilingual Approach because of a 'purist' view of language as reflected in their sentence completion answers. It was also found that although group 1 believed that Chinese language plays a dominant role in transmitting Chinese culture and believed strongly in language purity, it was open

to the idea that English can play a part in teaching Chinese language and Chinese culture. I have suggested that this might be due to the pragmatic advantage of using English to aid the understanding of Chinese words and culture.

Some implications

The linguistic and cultural divide between the older generation of English – educated and Chinese-educated Singaporeans have resulted in a difference in responses to the Bilingual Approach. However, the difference in responses is ideologically based, rather than rationally founded. It is difficult to override these ideologies and differing views will surface whenever there is an issue that involves the relationship between English and Chinese.

However, we need to bear in mind that although the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese do bear some of the old baggage of language ideologies such as language purity (especially with reference to Chinese language and Chinese culture), the nature of this baggage is changing and getting more complex as the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese face both the influences of the East and the West in terms of education and the media. For example, although group 1 believed strongly in language purity, it still recognized that English can play a part in transmitting Chinese culture. This may be a manifestation that the younger generation of Singaporean Chinese are in a kind of dichotomy, laden with the language ideological baggage of the older generation and the 'neutral language' versus 'mother tongue' argument of the government but at the same time, coming

to terms with their own bilingual profiles and the bilingual reality of Singapore society today. The equation of "one language = one race = one culture" is inadequate to deal with the complexity of reality and to stick to it, may in fact put a barrier to stop people from learning the language (in this case, Chinese) as the equation suggests segregation of languages and an over-simplistic view of the relationship between language and culture in multilingual societies today. In conclusion, there is a need to re-look at the portrayal of the relationship between language and culture in multilingual Singapore today and devise suitable pedagogies to deal with the differing linguistic profiles of the younger generation today.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

Through responses to the Bilingual Approach of teaching Chinese Language, the study has attempted to examine language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism. There are basically two kinds of attitudes, overt or conscious, and covert or unconscious. Direct measurements take the form of questionnaires which rely on self-reports whereas indirect measurements are those which infer attitudes from reactions and responses to stimuli where the subject is unaware of the aim of the investigation (Pakir, 1998b).

An example of indirect measurement of attitudes is the matched guise technique. This technique typically involves sets of speakers who are equally competent in more than one language variety reading the same text in different

language versions. Respondents listen to the recordings of the speakers without being aware that they are listening to the same speaker or the same set of speakers. They are then asked to evaluate the speaker on several attributes such as intelligence, friendliness and sincerity. Studies on accents and dialects have been successfully conducted using this technique. The current study has relied mainly on questionnaires as a direct measurement of language attitudes.

While I recognize that there may be a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour (Pakir, 1998b), I have chosen to employ a direct method of measurement as the best option available because the indirect measurements of language attitudes are not appropriate for my research topic. The indirect measurements such as the matched guise technique and observations of language use and behaviour in a range of social contexts are more suitable for research that investigates language use in different domains or subjective attitudes towards languages and towards speakers of these languages. Responses to a teaching method (e.g. the Bilingual Approach) which may manifest language ideologies such as language purity can hardly be obtained simply by observations. As Adegbija (2000: 78) points out, "a combination of approaches, adapted to suit the purpose of a particular line of research, seems to be the most prudent strategy to adopt in language-attitudes research." Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I have chosen to employ a mixture of methodology - questionnaire and interview. The accuracy of the data

obtained through the questionnaires and interviews would have to be taken in good faith.

It also has to be stated that while some may differentiate attitudes (evaluative and affective) from beliefs (cognitive) (Ammon, 1989), I have chosen to use the term "attitude" in this study as a generic term which encompasses the cognitive, evaluative and affective components. There may be differences between these components but the research instruments that have been employed in this study are not sharp enough to bring them out.

Moreover, it has to be stated that the results of this study cannot be over generalized to the Singaporean Chinese population due to its small sample size. However, it provides a good indication of some language ideologies commonly held by Singaporean Chinese and their changing diverse profiles. The study has looked at responses of Singaporean Chinese towards the Bilingual Approach. Further studies could be done to examine the attitudes of teachers and students who are directly affected by the Bilingual Approach.

5.3 FINAL REMARKS

This study has uncovered language attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingualism through responses to the Bilingual Approach of teaching Chinese Language. In the process, it has revealed that language ideologies such as language purity are prevalent in Singapore. The study has also called for a re-look at the way the relationship between language and culture has been portrayed in Singapore so that

it will better match up to the linguistic and cultural reality of Singapore's present society. The study has made some suggestions concerning the implementation of the Bilingual Approach in the classrooms which include looking into the translation method for teaching and assessment purposes, extending the Bilingual Approach to students who are strong in Chinese and educating parents on how they can work together with the schools.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am Andrea, a research graduate student from the National University of Singapore. The aim of this present research is to understand the opinions of Singaporean Chinese towards bilingualism and Chinese language learning. All information from this survey will be invaluable to my research.

Thank you for agreeing to be one of the respondents for this survey. Please complete the following questionnaire honestly, giving due consideration to each item. Kindly answer ***all*** *the questions. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is truly appreciated.*

Please be assured of the following:

1. *There is* ***no*** *right or wrong answer. Please select the answer that most truly reflects* ***your*** *personal opinion.*
2. *All information collected in the survey is* ***confidential****. No information identifying you will be published without your permission.*

For Questions 1-6, please write your answers in the blanks provided.

1. Nationality: _____

2. Ethnicity: _____

3. Age: _____

4. Gender: _____

5. Occupation: _____

6. Highest educational level: _____

7. *Please tick (✓) to indicate your answer.*

** The "medium of instruction" refers to the language that the school uses to teach most of the subjects*

Educational institutions attended		*Medium of instruction		
		English	Chinese	Not applicable
a.	Primary School			
b.	Secondary School			
c.	ITE			
d.	Polytechnic			
e.	Junior College			
f.	Pre-U Centre			
g.	University			
h.	Others: (Please state) _____			

8. *Please complete the following table. Please do **not** write in the grey boxes.*

Language used by you	Approx-imate age that you first started learning the language	How you MAINLY learnt to speak or write the language *(Please tick to indicate your answer(s). You may tick more than one answer.)*					
		Family	Maid	School	Friends	Media e.g. TV, radio, Internet	Others: (Please specify)
Spoken languages							
English							
Chinese							

Others: (Please state) _____							
Others: (Please state) _____							
Written languages							
English							
Chinese							
Others: (Please state) _____							
Others: (Please state) _____							

9. *Please write in the boxes the languages used in your communication with the following people.* ***Please write 'NA' if not applicable.***

** You may indicate more than one. For ease, you may use the following abbreviations:*

E- English;
C- Chinese;
D- Chinese dialects

For any other languages, please write the name(s) of the language(s) in full.

Person who communicates with you		*Language(s) spoken to you	*Language(s) spoken by you
a.	Father		
b.	Mother		
c.	Brothers and/or Sisters		
d.	Grandparents		
e.	Husband or Wife		
f.	Children		
g.	Maid		
h.	Close Friends		
i.	Colleagues		
j.	Others whom you communicate with OFTEN : (please state relationship) _____		

10. *Please list in order the languages which you speak, from the most frequent to the least frequent.*

_____ (most frequent)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. *Please circle (◯) to indicate your answer.*

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	I can listen well in Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	I can speak well in Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	I can read well in Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	I can write well in Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
e.	I can listen well in English.	5	4	3	2	1
f.	I can speak well in English.	5	4	3	2	1
g.	I can read well in English.	5	4	3	2	1
h.	I can write well in English.	5	4	3	2	1

12. *Please circle (◯) to indicate your answer.*
Please provide reasons for your answers in the blanks provided.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	I would like to improve my Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
	Reason(s): _____					
b	I would like to improve my English.	5	4	3	2	1
	Reason(s): _____					

c.	I would like my child to improve his/her Chinese. (Please ignore if not applicable.)	5	4	3	2	1
	Reason(s): _____					
d.	I would like my child to improve his/her English. (Please ignore if not applicable.)	5	4	3	2	1
	Reason(s): _____					

13. *For each statement (a-g), please put a tick (✓) in only one of the three boxes. The tick indicates that you agree that the named language has the following characteristics. The comparisons in the statements are made with respect to English and Chinese.*

		English	Chinese	Both equal
a.	makes the person who speaks it more powerful			
b.	is more high-class			
c.	is more useful commercially			
d.	is easier to learn			
e.	is nicer to listen to			
f.	creates friendliness more easily			
g.	creates closeness more easily			

Thank you for your patience in doing the questionnaire so far.

For the subsequent questions, I would like to hear your opinions regarding a particular teaching approach. Please allow me to briefly talk about it now.

The Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) announced the start of a pilot project known as the "Bilingual Approach to the Teaching of Chinese Language" in January 2002. In this project, English is used as a supplemental tool during Chinese lessons (e.g. teachers can use English to explain Chinese characters, students can ask questions in English etc). Chinese is still the main medium of instruction in these lessons. This pilot project is targeted at students from English-

speaking families who face difficulties in learning Chinese. It is meant as a transitional tool and the use of English in Chinese lessons will decrease as the students' Chinese improve. It is currently being tried out at 4 primary schools and 1 secondary school.

*For Questions 14-23, I would like to hear **your** personal opinions regarding this bilingual teaching approach. The "students" in the questions refer to students from English-speaking families who face difficulties in learning Chinese, unless otherwise stated.*

For Questions 14-20, please circle (○) to indicate your answer.

14.

If English is used to help teach Chinese,		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	it will help students to understand the meanings of Chinese words.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	students will still continue to use English instead of Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	little Chinese will be learnt.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	students will do better in their Chinese than before.	5	4	3	2	1
e.	it is hard to explain Chinese proverbs using English.	5	4	3	2	1
f.	students will do better in both their English and Chinese than before.	5	4	3	2	1

15.

If English is used to help teach Chinese,		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	students will want to learn Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	students will be more interested in learning Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	students will feel more at ease in learning Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	students will feel less frightened of learning Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
e.	students will gain confidence in learning Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
f.	students will dare to use Chinese more.	5	4	3	2	1

** For Questions 16-18, "culture" refers to the customs and the arts of a particular group of people, which reflect their way of thinking and living.*

16.

If English is used to help teach Chinese,		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	students will lose out on most of the Chinese *culture.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	students will still be able to understand Chinese culture.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	the Chinese cultural concepts will be changed.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	students will start to appreciate Chinese culture.	5	4	3	2	1
e.	students will lose out on some of the Chinese culture.	5	4	3	2	1

f.	English will be able to provide very accurate explanations for Chinese cultural concepts.	5	4	3	2	1

17.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	To practice Chinese culture, Chinese language plays a very important part.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	Knowledge of Chinese culture depends mainly on Chinese language.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	Practice of Chinese culture depends mainly on other factors (e.g. family practice and personal interest), not Chinese language.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	For some students, Chinese language can be such a pain that it drives them away from learning Chinese culture.	5	4	3	2	1
e.	To retain Chinese culture in yourself, you must know Chinese language.	5	4	3	2	1
f.	English can be used to teach Chinese moral values.	5	4	3	2	1
g.	English can be used to teach Chinese culture.	5	4	3	2	1
h.	Only Chinese can be used to teach Chinese culture.	5	4	3	2	1
i.	Only Chinese can be used to teach Chinese moral values.	5	4	3	2	1

18.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	Only English should be used in English lessons.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	Using English to help teach Chinese is impure.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	Only Chinese should be used in Chinese lessons.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	Using English to help teach Chinese is messy.	5	4	3	2	1

19.

To help students learn Chinese,		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	the medium of instruction (i.e. using English and Chinese) is the decisive factor.	5	4	3	2	1
b.	changing the medium of instruction is an important step, though not a decisive one.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	changing the medium of instruction does not help to solve the problem at all.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	changing the medium of instruction helps but does not solve the roots of the problem.	5	4	3	2	1

20.

To help students learn Chinese,		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	parents should encourage their children to learn Chinese (e.g. using media and books).	5	4	3	2	1
b.	parents should have positive attitudes towards Chinese themselves.	5	4	3	2	1
c.	parents should create a conducive home environment by speaking Chinese themselves.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	the family environment plays the most important role.	5	4	3	2	1
e.	the government should persuade parents to speak Chinese at home.	5	4	3	2	1
f.	the schools should treat Chinese as an important subject.	5	4	3	2	1
g.	the schools should make available an option of an easier syllabus of Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
h.	school teachers should explain Chinese passages vividly.	5	4	3	2	1
i.	the students must have positive attitudes towards learning Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
j.	it is good if the students' friends speak Chinese.	5	4	3	2	1
k.	public (includes everyone in the society) perception of Chinese must change to a positive one.	5	4	3	2	1

21. *Please circle (○) to indicate your answer.*

English can be used in Chinese lessons. Agree/ Disagree/

Neither agree nor disagree

22. *For each statement (a-d), please put a tick (✓) in only one of the four boxes. The tick indicates that you agree most with the option.*

a.	English should be used to help teach Chinese
	only for those students from English-speaking families who are weak in Chinese
	for all students who are weak in Chinese
	for every student (both strong and weak in Chinese)
	not applicable (i.e. English should not be used to help teach Chinese at all.)
b.	English can be used to
	explain the meanings of Chinese words when students face great difficulty in understanding the Chinese explanation
	communicate with the teachers or students during Chinese lesson
	do all of the above, as and when the teachers and the students find it helpful
	not applicable (i.e. English should not be used to help teach Chinese at all.)
c.	English can be used by
	only teachers
	only students
	both teachers and students
	not applicable (i.e. English should not be used to help teach Chinese at all.)
d.	We should use English to help teach Chinese
	until the students have shown an interest in learning Chinese
	until the students have improved their Chinese
	as long as it is still helpful in any way to the students
	not applicable (i.e. English should not be used to help teach Chinese at all.)

23. *Please list down the main reasons why you agree or disagree to using English in Chinese lessons. If you neither agree nor disagree, please indicate your reasons too.*

I agree because

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I disagree because

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I neither agree nor disagree because

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. Other comments (if any):

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. If you have any further questions about the survey, please email me at g0306172@nus.edu.sg. Should there be a need to contact you on matters regarding this survey, I would really appreciate it if you could provide the following information. Please be assured that these information would remain confidential and would be used strictly for research purpose only.

Email: _____

Name (optional): _____ Contact no. (optional): _____

THANK YOU

APPENDIX II

PRESS CUTTINGS AND POLICY STATEMENTS

The Straits Times INTERACTIVE

Mar 6, 2003 Thu

Teaching Chinese: English serves as 'float'

The approach, criticised by Chinese community, is a 'transitional tool' and shows promising results, says lecturer

By Jane Lee

THE man lambasted by the Chinese community for suggesting English be used to help teach Chinese has come out to clear the air.

Dr Goh Yeng Seng, 43, whose scheme is being tried out at four primary schools, broke his silence to speak to The Straits Times yesterday.

Likening the approach to a float which beginners use to master swimming, the National Institute of Education lecturer said: 'It's a transitional tool. A float helps you to keep your balance as you learn how to swim. Once you can swim, you won't need it any more.'

Dr Goh said he believed Singapore is the first country to use such an approach for children, but he added that language schools in China have been using English to teach Chinese to foreigners.

He added that preliminary findings of the project here - which started last year and will be reviewed at the end of this year - are promising.

A survey of the youngsters involved found that they like Chinese lessons. And their exam results in the subject, after one year, are on par with those who are being taught the traditional way.

Said Dr Goh: 'If the child likes Chinese, he'll be interested in the subject and is more likely to do well in it.'

He believes pupils' fear of the language is being dispelled as those in the scheme can ask questions in English if their Mandarin fails them.

The teacher replies in English, before repeating the answer in Mandarin.

One Primary 1 and Primary 2 class each from St Andrew's Junior, St Michael's, Anglo-Chinese (Junior) and Methodist Girls' (Primary) schools are involved.

Dr Goh explained that Chinese is still the main medium of instruction in these classes, but their bilingual teachers are occasionally using English to explain Chinese characters. This will decrease as the pupils' Chinese improves.

When the project was announced in January, it stirred up a hornet's nest in the Chinese community, which saw it as a 'humiliation'.

Critics said it would breed children who pepper Mandarin conversations with English words. But Dr Goh said that this existed long before his project started. He added the standards expected remain unchanged; the pupils still have to sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination.

From his research, he said, he found that children from English-speaking families lag behind those from Chinese-speaking ones in learning Chinese when starting Primary 1.

The bilingual approach will not be used for every pupil, he added. It is targeted at that group, to give them a level playing field.

■ 新加坡小学生：近四成小学生在家用英语沟通

美联社

11 **Bái māo, hēi māo, néng dài hàozi jiùshi hǎo māo.** 白猫，黑猫，能逮耗子就是好猫。(lit) [It doesn't matter if a] cat [is] black or white, [as long as it] can catch mice, it's a good cat. (fig) One's ideological persuasion is not important, as long as one can get the job done. [Attributed to Deng Xiaoping as an example of his pragmatic policies, for which he was criticized during the Cultural Revolution; see also *bùguǎn hēi māo* below.]

刘新团

■ 双语教学的例子：用学生熟悉的语言教课

中文水平低落，在教法上求突破

英文教中文 狮城新招数

英语已成为狮城许多华人的母语，政府为提升学生的中文程度，实验以英语为辅的方法教中文，引起激辩。赞成者称如此更易理解新词，反对者则认为无助提高中文水平。

顾问吴英成博士认为，当地正面临一种「脱华入英」的趋势，在相差十岁年轻人之间以超过百分之十的速度推进，如此快则十年，慢则二十年，英语将成当地华人最主要的母语，而华语（中国国语、普通话）将变成透过课堂学习而来的外语，因此如何改变华语的教学法就成了关键。

新加坡二零零零年的人口普查显示，以英语为主要家庭用语的华人，从九零年的百分之十九点二上升到二零零零年的百分之二十三点九。值得注意的是，百分之三十五点八年龄介于五至十四岁的华族儿童，以英语作为主要家庭用语。

在这种情况下，目前在新加坡南洋理工大学国立教育学院当助理教授兼中文系助理主任的吴英成提倡采用双语（即华语和英语）教学法，以协助新加坡学生提高华文程度。他指出，如果不在此时从学习者的家庭语言背景与学习策略为考量采取灵活务实的华语教学法，最终华语可能沦为一个可有可无的选修科目。

不过，从一月十日起，副总理兼财政部长李显龙公布教育部去年推出双语并用的华文教学法实验性计划以来，支持和反对者各执一词，在狮城引起不小的激荡。目前，这个计划已在四所小学和一所中学开始进行实验。

用英文学习助消除恐惧

赞成者以在家中讲英语的华人居多，他们认为以熟悉的英文作为学习华文的辅助工具，可帮助他们更容易理解词语，从而消除在学习初期对华文的恐惧感。一些华校生也以过去学英文的时候，英文老师用华语教导他们，说明用学生熟悉的语言教另一种语文是可行的。反对者则担心这将使华文水平继续下降，而新加坡人交谈时，华语掺杂英语的现象也将更严重。他们主张从根本上营造学习华文的气氛，指出中英文的语法完全不同，不能

狮城面临「脱华入英」的趋势，英语成华人主要的母语，华语则变成从课堂习得的外语，故改变教学法成了关键。

对大部分新加坡小学生来说，他们明白英文的「spoon」是甚么，但或许不知道这个词的中文说法就是「汤匙」。中文水平持续低落，多年来是许多关心华文教育的新加坡人担心的课题，然而情况似乎会继续恶化。

有学者认为，新加坡华人占了人口的七成，但是未来十年，英语将成为当地华人最主要的母语。新加坡「双语并用华文教学法实验性计划」学术

专访：双语华文教学计划学术顾问吴英成

让新加坡人全球占优势

双语教学如果成功，将能加强培养中英双语人才，让新加坡人在全球市场绽放光芒。

双语并用华文教学法实验性计划的学术顾问吴英成博士认为，双语教学是因材施教的策略，如果成功，将能加强培养中英双语人才，让新加坡人在中国乃至全球市场上占有优势。以下是他接受亚洲周刊专访的摘录：

华人是不是一定要能讲华语？不讲华语的华人算不算是华人？

我反对过于狭隘的「中国属性」，我们没有理由排斥那些不会讲华语的华人，而断言他们不是华人。以印尼华人为例，当地排华政策导致很多华人不能学习华语，这是环境所使然，绝非他们的意愿所能决定。再说新加坡，华人越来越能流利地使用强势的英语，这种「脱华入英」的趋势，是政府施行的语言政策的必然结果。决策者的选择是否合适，值得辩论，但我关注的是在现行的语言政策下，如何帮助学生有效地学习华语。双语并用的华文教学法就是以学习者的家庭语言背景与学习语言策略为考量，这是因材施教，而不是以一样米养百样人。

目前新加坡重视华文是不是因为中国经济起飞的影响？

新加坡选择英语作为各种族的共同语后，就进行语言功能二分法：英语是工具、经济的语言，华语是华族文化、认同的象徵。

中文具认同和经济效益

这样的二分法在中国还未开放以前并不会构成问题，因为我们过去主要跟西方国家进行贸易，不需要把华语当作贸易的媒介语。但是，目前我国政府以英语作为工具的考量已面临挑战，我们必须从这个角度与政府进行讨论。充份利用华语带来的经济效益，不但无损华人文化认同，还能进一步促进本地华语的应用层面。掌握华语仅是到中国从商的起码条件，我们应冷静对待中国的问题、好好跟中国打交道。

在抢搭中国顺风车的过程中，新加坡占有甚么优势？

全球华语可划分为三大同心圈：内圈、中圈和外圈。内圈包括中国与台湾两地，其特点是华语为强势主导语言，也是主要教学媒介语。中圈指以华语作为共通语的海外华人移民地区。外圈则是以华语作为外语学习的非华人地区。近年来，许多外籍人士到中国、台湾乃至新加坡进修华语。

在中圈里，新加坡是最重视华语的地区，我们的华语教学界应该积极担任内圈与外圈沟通的桥梁。再说，已经掌握英语的新加坡人，正可以从外语教学的角度去协助外圈学好华语。如果双语教学计划成功，我们可在中学增设翻译科，培养中英双语人才。相信不管在中国或全球化市场上，这样的人才都派得上用场。■

（何惜薇）

■ 吴英成：双语教学是因材施教的策略

刘新团

用一种语文来教另一种。

八十年代，新加坡政府决定关闭华文源流学校，如今年轻一代的当地华人对中华文化已经相当疏离，华文的式微令一些人忧心忡忡。不过，参与这场双语华文教学法讨论的人，不局限在背著沉重历史包袱的长者。

二十四岁的时评作者曾昭鹏则试著跳脱反对与赞成的二元对立角度，从整个社会大环境出发，提出疑问说：在新加坡，学生只要英文不及格，就等于面临彻底的失败，不是留级就是退学，「为什么对学华文有困难的英语家庭背景学生，却可以获得宽待呢」？过去，政府为学习华文有困难的学生，推出了要求较低的华文课程。

不等于完全用英语教学

对大众的积极讨论，吴英成强调，在这个计划中，英语仅是华语教学的辅助工具，「这不等于用英语教学，而是充份利用学生熟悉的英语知识，理解他们所不熟悉的华语」。他认为，从社会语言学著眼，第一语文是指学校的主要教学媒介语，也是当地社会的强势工作语言，在新加坡第一语文就是英文。对许多在家讲英语的学生来说，华语只能算是第二语文，而不是母语。

在英国伦敦大学亚非学院获语言学博士学位的吴英成说，就语言学习理论而言，第二语文的初学者都必须经过第一语文词汇联结的「中介」过程，也就是借助第一语文来掌握概念。「这个学习过程是必然的，华校生初学英文时需要借助华文，而英校生初学华文时就得借助英文。在进行第二语文教学时，如果禁止第一语文的使用，无疑是叫儿童停止以第一语文思考，这就是单语教学最不合理的地方。」

不过，他表示，要留意的是，不是所有中英文词义及语法都是对等的，好比说「Dog是不能吃的，狗是可以吃的」。在西方国家，狗是不少人最忠诚的朋友，但在中文里，几乎所有以狗构成的词语都含有贬义。正因如此，参与双语教学计划的教师除了必须是受训合格，还得兼通英语，并在受训期间修读「中英对比分析」以及「双语教学法」等专业培训课程。吴英成更要求这些教师，在教学过程中通盘了解学生因受英语影响而孳生的病句，从而积极帮助学生纠正错误。（何惜薇）■

Ministry of Education
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Press Releases

Print this page

23 February 2004

Bilingual Approach (BA) to the Teaching of Chinese Language at the Primary Level Extended to Seven Other Schools

1. In 2002, the Ministry of Education (MOE) piloted the Bilingual Approach (BA) to the teaching of Chinese Language (CL) in 4 primary schools, namely, Anglo-Chinese School (Junior), Methodist Girls' School (Primary), St Andrew's Junior School and St Michael's School. In this approach, teachers make use of English as a tool at the initial stage of teaching CL.

2. The primary schools in the project were chosen to pilot BA because they had a high proportion of pupils from English-speaking homes. CL teachers who were bilingual in both CL and EL were selected to teach in the pilot.

3. BA is a supplementary approach to the teaching of CL at the initial stage. The use of BA allows teachers the flexibility to use English Language to facilitate the teaching of CL when necessary and helps students to understand the text better and faster. Pupils in these classes are also allowed to use some English to express themselves more clearly and clarify their doubts during the initial learning stage of CL.

4. The project started in Jan 02 and was evaluated at the end of 2003. The following key findings were made:

- Teachers found the BA to teaching CL useful for pupils who were weaker in the language as they showed more enthusiasm during CL lessons and were more ready to ask and answer questions. The pupils were also able to understand their lessons more easily;

- Using the BA to teach CL helped to improve communication between pupils and their teachers;

- The majority of participating pupils developed a favourable attitude towards the learning of CL;

- Both the pupils in the BA classes and their parents strongly favoured the use of BA and bilingual materials in the learning of CL;

- It is important to gradually reduce the use of English when the pupils, who use BA

as a supplementary approach to learn CL move to Primary 3 to ensure that they will be able to do as well as pupils not on the BA. At that level, pupils will be taught using only the mainstream approach.

5. This year, seven additional primary schools have joined the original four participating primary schools in adopting the BA as a supplementary tool to teaching CL. These schools are Fairfield Methodist Primary School, Henry Park Primary School, Marymount Convent School, Montfort Junior School, St. Anthony's Primary School, St. Gabriel's Primary School and St. Stephen's School.

6. BA is one of the approaches to the teaching of CL, such as the use of Hanyu Pinyin. It serves to help a small number of students coming from an English-speaking home environment and facing extreme difficulties in the learning of CL. Any school that has pupils who will benefit from this teaching approach can request for relevant training and teaching resources from MOE to use BA as part of its teaching repertoire.

7. Dr Goh Yeng Seng, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group (Chinese) at the National Institute of Education, will continue as Academic Advisor in 2004. He will help to train teachers, provide necessary guidance to the teachers, and advise MOE on BA matters. He will also help to provide teachers with a set of guidelines on a smooth and effective withdrawal process for pupils learning CL using the BA.

CLOSE

双语教华文

潘星华 报道

双语教华文试行有效 今年推广到另七小学

在小一小二，学生还没有足够的华文词汇时期，教师因为能使用学生熟悉的英语来指导，学生学起来不会茫茫然，而开始对这个陌生的语文有了兴趣。而且，学生因为能使用他们熟悉的英语来发问，也能及时澄清了心中很多疑虑，对学习华文有了信心。

——课程规划与发展署署长章秀清

吴英成副教授：教师用双语教华文，都需要经过特别培训，而不是随意使用英语即可。

"双语并用华文教学法"过去两年在四所小学试验，证明对来自讲英语家庭、学习华文有困难的学生很有效。教育部因此让另外7所小学在今年使用这套教学法。

这7所学校是花莘卫理小学、恒力小学、玛丽蒙女校、蒙福小学、圣安东尼小学、圣加倪尔小学、圣斯德望学校。

过去两年参加试行计划的4所小学是英华小学（经禧）、美以美女小、圣安德烈小学和圣弥额尔小学。

这11所学校有66.96%至95.8%的学生来自讲英语的家庭。

教育部课程规划与发展署署长章秀清昨天在记者会上说，这套让教师和学生以英语和华语并用，来教导和学习华文的方法，是一套让小学生在初学华文时期使用的辅助教学法。

她说，试行两年后所进行的调查显示，在小一小二，学生还没有足够的华文词汇时期，教师因为能使用学生熟悉的英语来指导，学生学起来不会茫茫然，而开始对这个陌生的语文有了兴趣。而且，学生因为能使用他们熟悉的英语来发问，也能及时澄清心中很多疑虑，对学习华文有了信心。师生之间，有了交流和互动，使课堂上的学习气氛活跃很多。家长基本上也非常支持这套教学法，认为华英双语并用，能够帮助孩子更容易更快和更好地学习华文。

章秀清说，为不让学生过度倚仗英文，教师建议从小二开始，有必要逐渐减少英文的使用，为学生从小三开始回到全用华语学习华文的阶段做好准备。

4所试行小学试验班的学生今年升上小三，虽然不再以双语学习华文，教育部仍然密切注意他们的进展，随时予以援手。

章秀清说："教导华文的媒介语言，我们绝无意以英语来代替。就算这套教学法，现在可在全国学校某些班级使用，但也不是让全体学生使用。有很多学校已向我们表明，他们的学生学华文并不需要双语并用，他们会寻求其他不同的方法学好华文。我们完全让学校按学生的需求作决定。"

她说，这套教学法既已被证明有效，校长只要发现学校某部分学生有使用这套教学法的需要，可以派教师到教育部接受培训，然后在学校采用。有多少班会采用这个教学法，全视各校不同需要而定。

教育部双语并用华文教学法学术顾问吴英成副教授说，使用双语教华文，讲解课文时，该在什么地方使用英语，什么地方不能使用英语，还有所使用的英语是否正确，都影响到这个教学法的实效性，所以，任何学校有意采用这套教学法，都需要经过特别培训，而不是随意使用英语即可。

他说："一切都要经过正确的指导、监督，否则，到时，英语将不是一个辅助工具，而是危险的工具了。由校长推荐来的教师，虽是华英双语兼优，也要上20小时的培训，才能教课。"

这套教学法于2002年初，除了四所小学，也曾在英华中学（巴克路）试行，但是效果不及从小一就开始的理想。

吴英成说："到了中学才使用这套教学法已经有太迟的遗憾了。学生不了解的华文已经太多，所以我们认为应该越早开始越好。在学习之初，就让学生尽早用他们熟悉的英文，认识华文。到中学才来解决，已经太迟了。"

吴英成：双语教学法 不会降低学生华文水平

24/02/04
Lianhe Zaobao
P.3

双语并用华文教学法不会降低学生华文水平。

这项教学法的学术顾问吴英成副教授说："华文的听、说、读、写四技，我们一项也不少。而且，这些学生的华文试卷，与其他同学一样。这完全是为了帮助来自讲英语家庭的学生学好华文，是殊途同归的教学法。"

他说，双语并用华文教学法是以华语为主、英语为辅。这是过渡性教学策略，随着学生华文程度提高，英语使用频率将逐步降低，最终达到只用华语学习的目标。

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——吴英成

吴英成（45岁）在1996年获得伦敦大学亚非学院语言学博士学位，现任南洋理工大学国立教育学院中文系副教授兼助理主任。

他接受本报专访时说："利用学生的主导语言（英文）作为辅助语言，在过去两年已证明能有效地协助学生掌握华文，引起他们对华文的兴趣。"

为什么在初期需要借用学生的主导语言来学习华文呢？

吴英成说："在初始阶段，学生的华文词汇贫乏，很难理解教师在讲什么。就好像学游泳，初学者要用浮板作为辅助工具。了解了水性、掌握了游泳姿势，就可以抛开浮板。"

他说，双语并用华文教学法充分利用学生的主导语言—英语，来支援华文的学习。这跟主流华文教学强调以华语讲解不同。

吴英成说："对来自讲英语家庭的学生，英文是第一语文，华文是第二语文。如果在教第二语文时，强制禁止第一语文的介入，无疑是叫儿童停止第一语文的思考，而事实上，这是不可能的。学第二语文，必然受到第一语文影响，所以我们采取的态度是积极处理，而不是排斥压抑。"

为确保教师所使用的英语完全正确，教育部特别为试验阶段的小一和小二课文提供英文内容概要，帮助学生理解课文，"这样做是为了支援授课的华文教师，不必再做中英对照的工作。"

除了课本，学生在课余时间也需读教育部为他们所准备的中英对照辅助读物。

所有参加双语并用华文教学法的教师，必须接受两个专门课程培训。他说："有一些原则是必须坚持的，例如，教师必须以学生的华文姓名称呼，用英语讲解后，必须再以华语讲解等。"

他说，过去两年的试验结果证明，由于可以在上课时用英语发问，试验班的学生对学习华文的兴致非常高昂。家长对此感到非常满意。

有一名家长告诉吴英成，他有两个儿子，一个参加了双语并用学华文的试验班，非常爱读华文；另一个在小五读华文的儿子，则非常讨厌华文。

吴英成说，在2002年试验之初，从为小一学生进行的课前双语测试可以发现来自讲英语家庭和来自将华语家庭学生，掌握华文的能力已经大不相同。

他说："既然是两种不同背景的学生，起步已经不同，我们为什么还要坚持以一套教学法来满足两种学生呢？那是不合常理的。"因此，必须尽早从小一开始，就以学生的主导语言来协助他们学习华文。

吴英成说，没有好好掌握小学阶段的华文词汇，到了中学，学习起来，倍见困难。就算用英语辅助，也不容易。

More schools to use English in Chinese classes

24/02/04 The Straits Times, p. 1

By YVONNE KOH

USING English to teach Chinese to young children works, and a pilot scheme in four schools has proven so successful that it is being extended.

It was tried out at Primary 1 and 2 at schools with a high proportion of pupils from English-speaking homes.

In less than two years, the children became more confident in Chinese classes. They spoke up, and expanded their Chinese vocabulary too.

The good feedback came in an Education Ministry survey of the pupils, parents and teachers at St Andrew's Junior, St Michael's School, Anglo-Chinese (Junior) and Methodist Girls' Primary.

Now, seven more schools will adopt the method at Primary 1: Henry Park Primary, St Gabriel's Primary, St Stephen's, Montfort Junior, Fairfield Methodist Primary, St Anthony's Primary and Marymount Convent.

Like the first four, they also have at least two-thirds of their pupils coming from English-speaking homes.

The ministry is open to allowing other schools to adopt the same approach.

In class, teachers use English where they have to, for example, to explain Chinese characters to their pupils.

Pupils can ask questions in English if they cannot do so in Mandarin, a practice traditionally discouraged.

News of the experiment had earlier drawn protests from those who were worried that the use of English would compromise Chinese language standards.

But the ministry's survey, carried out last year, may put some of these fears to rest.

It found that three-quarters of the parents of pupils taught this way said their children now had no fear of Chinese, while two thirds said the children had grown more eager to learn the language.

Teachers said the approach improved communication in class and the children were participating more.

Still, the move to use the method in more schools drew familiar criticism yesterday that English would be a "crutch" for pupils from English-speaking homes.

Responding, the Education Ministry said pupils learning Chinese were expected to be weaned off English.

Chinese teachers use less of it in Primary 2, and by Primary 3, all pupils are expected to speak in Mandarin during Chinese lessons.

Chinese stays the main medium of instruction and exam standards will not be lowered.

The introduction of new teaching methods is part of the move to make second-language learning more flexible for Singapore children, more of whom now come from non-Mandarin-speaking homes.

Almost half of all Primary 1 pupils speak English at home, compared with 40 per cent five years ago, while the number of Chinese-speaking homes has declined from a peak of 69 per cent in 1989 to 50 per cent today.

English-speaking parents generally welcomed the move to allow English into early Chinese language teaching.

Madam Alicia Yap, whose son entered St Michael's School last year, said it had encouraged him to speak up in Chinese class.

借英语诠释，让华文亲切

25/02/04 Lianhe Zaobao p. 11

林如兴

教育部再一次改革华文教学法，以英文引导那些无法掌握华文的学生，学好华文。笔者认为我们应该用宏观的视野来看待这项措施。

笔者生长的时代，新加坡教育政策开始统一以英文为主要教学语文。在语文政策改变的那一时刻，我们这群“纯华文”学生都无法适应。

尤其在中四那一年，全部的教学和材料都是以英文为主，学生苦不堪言。上英语课的时候，老师就按着学校的要求 纯粹以英语来教，而我们全班几乎都不知道老师在讲什么，有如鸭子听雷。

后来，老师知道我们根本无法跟上，又要面对中四会考，于是改变策略，在英语课时用华语来帮助我们明白课文的内容，也让同学们了解老师的要求。就是这样，我们对英语的学习态度就完全不同了，上课就不再是一种累赘、负担。

要是当时老师不敢采取“借华语来教导英文”的策略，肯定会有更多学生完全放弃英语！

借助英语来教华文，相信会让更多学生感到华文的亲切，以积极的态度来学习。现今教师的培训应该也会比旧时代强，有能力运用更多样更灵活的方法来教学。

调查也显示，目前有更多学生期待能够修读高级华文，而不是临阵脱逃。走上学习华文道路的学生人数越来越多，我们其实不必太多顾虑。

Are teachers able to use English to teach Chinese?

I REFER to the article, "More schools to use English in Chinese classes" (ST, Feb 24).

While I applaud the use of this new teaching method and look forward to my son being taught this way, I have a concern which I hope the Ministry of Education could address: Are our Chinese-language teachers proficient enough to use English to teach Chinese? As it is, many English teachers themselves are not sufficiently well versed in standard English to teach the language. It's sad but true.

Being an English-language primary-school teacher myself, I wonder if this is yet another initiative which the ministry will impose on school principals, who will in turn impose on teachers to comply or risk being penalised via their performance bonuses.

English should be used to teach Chinese only if a teacher is able to use both languages proficiently.

LYNETTE CAROLYN EE SU YIN (MDM)

26/02/04 The Straits Times, p. 24